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WALKER JOHN WALSH,
CLAN WHITEMAN SMITH

Lawyers demand death inquiry

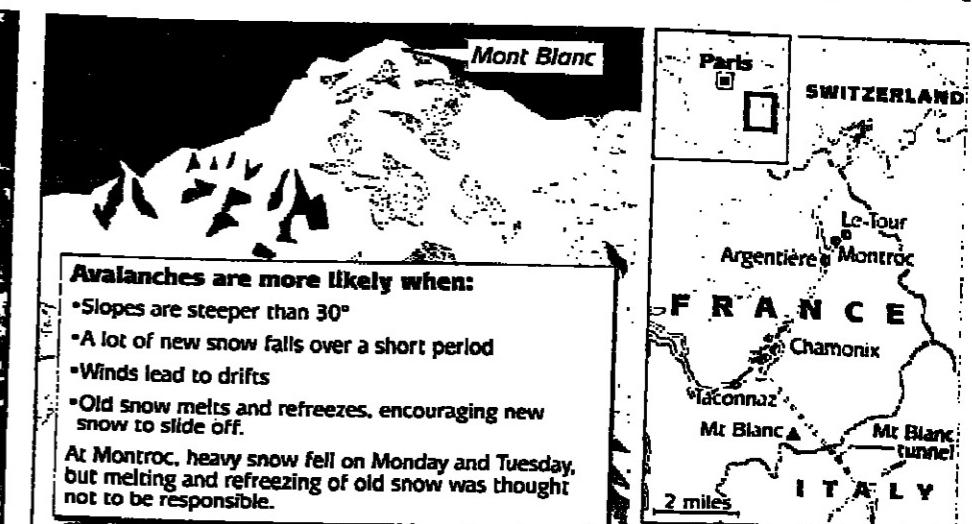
By DAWN MCKINNON

an inspector at the coroner's office said he had found evidence of "reckless behaviour" by police officers during the search for the fugitive.

The coroner's report, which has been sent to the Home Office, will be published next month.



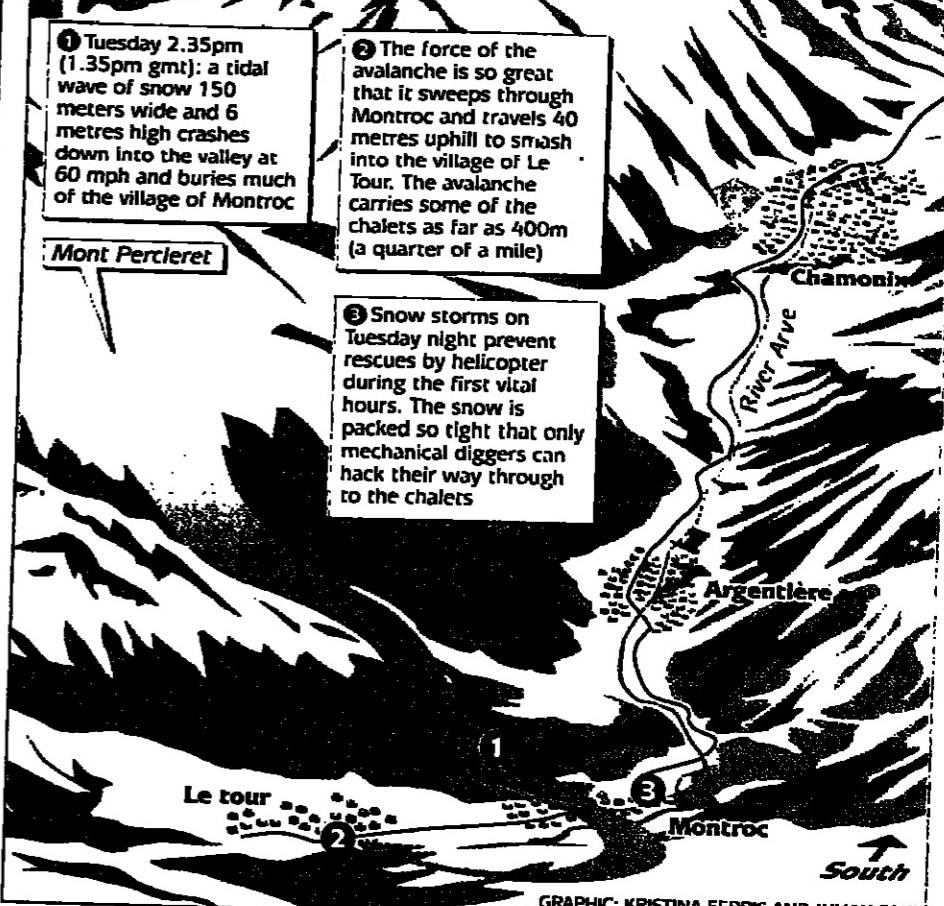
Jean Marie Pavé (centre, with hat) and his family yesterday. They were rescued after the avalanche had destroyed their chalet



Avalanches are more likely when:

- Slopes are steeper than 30°
- A lot of new snow falls over a short period
- Winds lead to drifts
- Old snow melts and refreezes, encouraging new snow to slide off.

At Montroc, heavy snow fell on Monday and Tuesday, but melting and refreezing of old snow was thought not to be responsible.



GRAPHIC: KRISTINA FERRIS AND JULIAN SAUL

Alpine paradise was smothered at 60mph

MICHEL, a softly spoken man in his thirties, stood weeping between the enormous banks of snow in the village street. "No one dreamed anything like this could happen," he said.

"These houses were in the safest possible zone for avalanches. But what does anyone of us really know? When the mountain decides, the mountain decides. There is nothing you can do. I have lost people that I loved a great deal. Here, we have all lost people that we loved a great deal. The whole village is crying."

He turned away, unable to say any more.

The Chamonix valley was in a state of shock - and fear - yesterday after a monumental avalanche crushed 18 chalets in the hamlet of Montroc, at 4,600ft in the Mont Blanc massif, killing at least 10 people, including a family of five, an elderly couple and their four-year-old granddaughter. Two other people were missing; 20 were rescued, including two Americans and a 12-year-old boy, found under several feet of snow and rubble. All the dead were French.

Rescue work was continuing last night, with heavy digging and lifting equipment but hope of finding further survivors had been virtually lost. With temperatures falling to minus 7C, the snow had packed too hard for hands or shovels to penetrate.

The 150-yard-wide, 18ft-high

avalanche crashed into the valley bottom at an estimated 60mph. It crossed a stream and one part swept on for 30 to 40 yards uphill to consume a group of chalets on the opposite slope.

Hence the sense of shock and fear among local people. "I have lived here all my life and I have never heard of an avalanche so powerful, so low down in the mountains, and I have never heard of an avalanche capable of going uphill," said one gendarme,

resting in the village of Argentière, two kilometres away, after hours of digging in the packed snow and debris.

Other buildings, some local homes and some holiday chalets, were carried 400 metres down the valley by the remainder of the avalanche. "It's horrible. There is nothing left,"

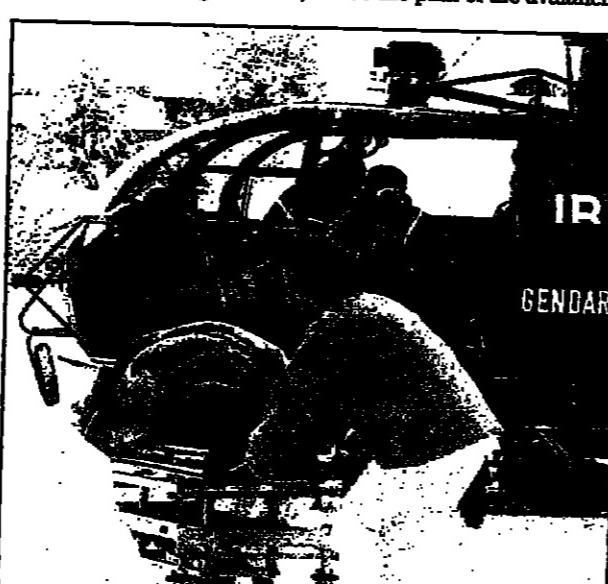
said Jean-Louis Verdier, the assistant mayor of Chamonix, 10 miles from the disaster scene. "Everything was wiped away. Where the chalets should be, there is a big hole." Jean-Marie Pavé, 49, who was staying in a house just outside the path of the avalanche

said: "The chalet next to ours disappeared. It was pushed across the road. There were blocks of cement everywhere ... It was the apocalypse."

The 12-year-old French boy was pulled from several feet of the snow and rubble by rescuers working with sonic equipment and sniffer dogs after being trapped for several hours. He was taken to hospital with extreme hypothermia where his condition appeared to be desperate. But he was said to be recovering strongly yesterday.

This was the only real success of an arduous night for 200 rescue workers. After an initial flurry of rescues, all the victims recovered were dead, including the couple and their children aged 11 to 13. The four-year-old girl found in the wreckage of a chalet near the bodies of her grandparents seemed to be just alive but was declared dead on arrival in hospital in Chamonix.

Gendarmes and firemen returning from the rescue scene yesterday said nothing could have been done to prevent the tragedy. The highest level of avalanche alert had been given the day before, but the homes in Montroc were not regarded as under threat. The chalets were in a "white zone", regarded as almost completely free of danger. "We've had six feet of snow in three days," one fireman said. "No one can remember now falls like that."



A casualty arriving by helicopter at Chamonix hospital

Villages that were left defenceless

THE CHAMONIX valley is no stranger to death in the winter, but the tragedy at the mountain villages of Le Tour and Montroc shocked even the most hardened residents.

The harshness of the landscape and its close proximity to Geneva has made Chamonix a burial ground for the adventurous. The cemetery is filled with climbers who died young, following their sport. Every year brings fresh tragedies.

Opening a small mountain cabin in the valley, I have be-

By COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

come used to seeing helicopters going to the rescue of climbers and skiers.

An avalanche brushed aside a large wood above the small commune of Taconnaz, where I live, a few years ago. Now the French have built an enormous wall as an avalanche defense for the village.

A second defensive wall was built to stop the Taconnaz glacier avalanching on to the mo-

torway that runs into the mouth of the Mont Blanc tunnel.

But Montroc and Le Tour had no such avalanche defenses. Lying at the head of the Chamonix valley, and the pass which is closed when it becomes impassable, they had learnt to live with the deepest snows each year but even the locals had never seen anything like the quantity of snow which fell in recent weeks.

A week ago I dug a metre deep to get into my ski chalet and since then more

than 1.5 metres of snow have fallen on Montroc and Le Tour.

The Savoyard village of Le Tour was the sort of high-mountain hamlet that photographers for the glossy ski brochures drooled over until the avalanche struck.

Le Tour and Montroc are the home for some of the serious expatriate British skiers who spend the season in the Chamonix valley, skiing in the rugged resort of Argentière on the largely off-piste slopes of the Grands Montets.

Young women don't enjoy sex

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

ence some form of sexual dysfunction, ranging from lack of desire to attaining an erection and reaching orgasm.

Most striking are the findings for younger women, aged 18 to 29. According to the survey - conducted by researchers from the University of Chicago and based on interviews with 3,400 adults - 27 per cent get no pleasure from having sex and, if anything, consider it an ordeal. The same view was expressed by 17 per cent of women aged 50-59.

The findings appear to ex-

plore the popular notion that young people, or at least young women, enjoy the hottest sex.

For women, age is not the big deal everyone assumes it is. Edward Laumann, one of the study's authors, said yesterday.

In their conclusion, the authors said the results indicate that sexual problems are widespread in society and are influenced by health-related and psychosocial factors.

The report suggests a reality that is at odds with the images of satisfying sex that saturate books, magazines, film and television. "This problem warrants recognition as a sig-

nificant public health concern," the study asserts.

Mr Laumann added that the various difficulties suffered by men, including performance anxiety and premature ejaculation, explains the extraordinary success of the Viagra potency pill. "I think it gives us a base for explaining why we had this enormous response," he said.

Experts yesterday offered an array of possible explanations for the study's gloomy findings, ranging from the modern pressures of work to emotional and health problems as well as fear about sexual diseases, including AIDS.

case this year, with falls of six feet of snow in the Chamonix area since the weekend. If the pattern continues, all the conventional wisdom about safe and dangerous zones for avalanches will have to be torn up.

There have been dozens of other avalanches in the French Alps in the last two days, most occurring safely high in the mountains. Three British holidymakers - Paul Macey, 28, from Bristol, Karen Turner, 28, also from Bristol, and Maddie Sidanie, 32, from Oxford - were engulfed by a snow slide at Tignes les Brevieres, 50 miles

south of Chamonix. They were not deeply buried and managed to scramble free.

Rescuers also found the body yesterday of a 28-year-old Briton who disappeared in an avalanche while skiing off-piste near Courchevel, south of Chamonix.

Police and prosecutors have issued warnings that tough action will be taken against skiers who ignore warnings of avalanche dangers and leave marked trails.

The avalanche at Montroc had no such obvious cause; and it was all the more terrifying for that reason.



VALENTINE'S DAY.

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Transfusions kill patients, say doctors

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS given routinely to tens of thousands of critically ill patients may be killing them, doctors have found.

Canadian researchers have found that giving extra blood, despite its essential role in maintaining life, can cause more harm than good in those who have been thought in greatest need of it.

The unexpected finding, from a study of more than 800 critically ill patients, will deliver a serious blow to the idea of accident victims being stretchered into hospital with a bag of life-giving blood suspended above them.

Doctors had assumed that any means of boosting oxygen supply to the body's tissues in those who were seriously ill would improve their chances of survival. But the Canadian research shows that critically ill patients who received more blood were up to twice as likely to die as those who received less.

In Britain, an estimated 800,000 patients receive blood transfusions each year, most after routine surgery, and demand for blood is rising. Using less blood would also save costs and conserve a scarce resource.

Drug 'triggers cancer'

A DRUG used to prevent tissue rejection after transplant operations may be the reason why these patients are more likely to develop potentially fatal cancers, scientists have discovered.

Cyclosporine, a drug that suppresses the immune system and so inhibits the body's natural mechanism for tissue rejection, directly alters cancer cells to make them highly dangerous, the study shows.

The findings have been called "provocative" by experts, some of whom remain unconvinced that cyclosporine can directly investigate a cancer. The sceptics believe immune suppression in

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

ings indicate that the use of a threshold ... as low as 7 grams of haemoglobin per decilitre ... was at least as effective as and possibly superior to a liberal transfusion strategy ... in critically ill patients."

It is well-known that giving too much blood or other infusions can cause heart attacks or water on the lungs because of the effort required to pump the extra liquid round the body. But the researchers found these factors could not explain the differences they found.

In a commentary on the findings, Wesley Ely and Gordon Bernard of the Vanderbilt School of Medicine, Nashville, say it is difficult to explain the harm caused by liberal transfusion. One possibility is that a transfusion, like a transplant, delivers a shock to the immune system. "Harmless" viruses in the blood may also be implicated.

They say more trials are needed to determine the best treatment for critically ill patients. "With such knowledge, more physicians will be able to adhere to the dictum 'first do no harm', and we will have a surplus of blood for transfusion rather than a shortage."

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

This would make a cancer able to spread around the body.

In a research paper published in the journal *Nature* they produce evidence to show the effects are also seen in laboratory animals, and that the observed changes can be reversed if cyclosporine is inhibited by a blocking agent - further implicating the drug as a cancer-causing agent.

"Our findings suggest that immunosuppressants like cyclosporine can promote cancer progression by a direct cellular effect that is independent of its effect on the host's immune cells," the researchers conclude.

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IND 3



مكتبة الفضل



Shobdon Church in Herefordshire, Britain's only rococo church, impressed some visiting Japanese business men so much they have decided to build a replica of it near Tokyo as a wedding chapel. The copy in Japan must be built to withstand earthquakes

Andrew Fox

Jury see pictures of Death Road

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

THE JURY in Britain's first Nazi war crimes trial was yesterday shown photographs in Eastern Europe where a South London pensioner is alleged to have murdered 20 Jews more than 50 years ago.

Over a period of several hours, the Old Bailey jury studied aerial and ground photographs of Domachevo, the town in Belarus where Polish-born Anthony Sawoniuk served with the police force during the Nazi occupation of 1941-44. The pictures showed the site of the Jewish ghetto, the sand hills on the outskirts of town where 2,900 Jews were killed in one day and the so-called Road of Death which linked the sand hills to the ghetto.

The evidence came during the third day of the trial of Mr Sawoniuk, 77, from Bermondsey, who is charged, under 1991 legislation, with four counts of murder in 1942. Mr Sawoniuk denies the charges.

Yesterday, John Nutting QC, for the prosecution, said it was important that the jury understood the layout of the town and its surrounding area.

In an unprecedented move, the court will next week visit Domachevo.

Each photograph shown yesterday featured a different overview of the town which suffered under the Nazis. Photograph 33 showed the ghetto where the Germans insisted the Jewish population live in cramped conditions, with virtually no food and under persistent harassment from the authorities.

Photograph 35 showed the town's Catholic church. The jury had previously been told it was from here that a witness, Galina Puchkina, saw the Germans lead hundreds of Jews to the sand hills. She remembered hearing the sound of gunfire as the men, women and children were executed.

Mr Nutting alleged that on one occasion, a witness saw Mr Sawoniuk order 15 women to strip naked before shooting them and pushing them into a pre-dug grave.

The trial continues.

A couple (male and female) with non-smokers, aged 29, applying for a PEP mortgage of £60,000 secured over 25 years on a property with a purchase price of £67,000. Monthly mortgage payment net of tax noted £171.00. 300 monthly payments. Monthly PEP premium £9.78. Total annual premium £314.16, which includes a charge for £12, charge for discount of £10, deeds £25 and initial interest of £25.33 assuming completion on 18th May 1999. In calculating the APR, the example assumes a rate of 3.65%, 3.65% APR applies throughout the mortgage term. The rate is fixed for the first 12 months and then reverts to a variable rate thereafter. The rate is based on the current rate on 30th April 2001, this is currently 0.95%. Rates quoted are variable. APR shown is typical for a PEP mortgage for 25 years. Calls may be monitored. You must be aged 18 or over and give us a mortgage application. We may need additional mortgage security. We will take into account your personal and financial circumstances and the value or price of your property. These and the product you choose will affect how much we lend you. If any additional mortgage security is held there will be a fee for this. With calls discounted or fixed interest rates, the standard interest rate will only apply during the special rate period. We can cancel these arrangements. For more details and warnings about PEP mortgages, see the PEP leaflet. With calls discounted or fixed interest rates, the standard interest rate will only apply during the special rate period. The special rate period will end on 30th April 2001. If you repay a special rate loan before the end of the repayment period, we will charge a fee. The special rate period will end on 30th April 2001. The repayment fee will be a percentage of the special rate loan amount. The APR is calculated assuming that the rate charged does not change after the special rate period.

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Jury see pictures of Death Road

THE INDEPENDENT
Thursday 11 February 1999

Pensioners win £1.5bn funds battle

TWO PENSIONERS yesterday won a six-year legal battle which could present Britain's power industry with a bill for £1.5bn.

The Court of Appeal ruled that privatised electricity companies had unlawfully plundered their pension funds of the money in order to finance redundancies and reduce liabilities.

The pensioners, David Laws and Reg Mayes, successfully argued that pensions were "deferred pay and not a pot of gold to be raided by fat cats". The judgment could set a precedent for pensioners in a wide range of industries which have adopted similar tactics.

In a ruling which affects all 21 companies in the power supply industry, three judges decided that National Power acted unlawfully when it took £250m from the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme. The ruling also applied to National Grid's withdrawal of £46.5m.

Mr Laws, 60, of Chatham in Kent, registered his anger over news that employers might take the case to the House of Lords. "We are pensioners and we want our money now," he said. "We don't want to wait another two years or more." He said the decision could result in payments of £10,000 to pensioners. "The average widow's pension is £20 a week. Many pensioners are on housing benefit and caught in the poverty trap. Why should more of them die in poverty?"

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

abandoned schemes based on final salary in favour of money-purchase schemes which could be less advantageous to pensioners. The point was supported yesterday by Ken Jackson, leader of the engineering union, who described the ruling as "disastrous".

Harold Lewis, of the solicitors Eversheds, who represented National Grid, argued that yesterday's ruling made it clear that companies were allowed to withdraw money in their own interests where there was a surplus.

Peter Woods, of the plaintiffs' solicitors Stephens Innocent, said further delay would simply mean more pensioners benefits of the litigation.

The appeal judges decided there was nothing in the rules of the pension scheme which gave employers unilateral power "to forgive themselves their liabilities to pay contributions which are already due".

The fund could not be "whittled away by unilateral decisions on their part", said Lord Justice Brooke, sitting with Lords Justices Nourse and Schiemann.

However one drawback of yesterday's judgment was pointed out by Mr Justice Robert Walker, the High Court judge who found against the pensioners in 1997. He said that "any general exclusion of employers from surpluses would tend to make employers very reluctant to contribute to their pension schemes more than the bare minimum they could get away with".

He said it would be even more unfortunate if companies

Business Outlook, page 19



Reg Mayes (left) and David Laws yesterday at the High Court, where they won their pensions fight. James Horton

MISSING BILLIONS

THE 200,000 electricity pensioners affected by today's ruling by the Court of Appeal could each stand to benefit by more than £500 a year if the National Grid does not appeal to the House of Lords.

While the case involved just the Grid, the ruling will set a precedent for all the other former state-owned electricity companies, including National Power, PowerGen and the regional electricity companies.

Bacon & Woodrow, a firm of actuarial consultants, estimate the pensioners would each be entitled to an average £7,500 share of the £1.5bn surplus which may have to be returned to the £18bn fund. That would mean a benefit of between £500 and £750 a year, or an extra £10-15 a week. The exact figure will depend on the final salary and length of service of each pensioner.

Occupational pension schemes hold more than £650bn in members' assets and own more than one-third of the stock market equity. According to Inland Revenue statistics, there is at least £4bn in official pension fund surpluses. But experts believe the real figure runs into tens of billions.

Pension experts warned the case did not mean employees could claim ownership of surplus. And while the judgment says the National Grid scheme acted outside its powers, it did not insist the £46m at issue must be refunded.

ANDREW VERITY

'For sale: flat next to drug dealers'

AN ESTATE AGENT was forced to apologise yesterday over a candid newspaper advert for a flat which highlighted the property's close proximity to drug dealers.

The description of the £25,000 flat in Nailsea, near Bristol, which appeared in the Bristol Evening Post, read: "First-floor bedsit in generally good order

BY LINUS GREGORIADIS

Drug dealers next door. Shops and local facilities nearby."

The advertisement, by Halifax Property Services, struck a raw nerve in an area which is notorious for a council-owned tower block called Crown House. The advertised flat is in a privately-owned block near by.

John Alvis, who lives in the flats, said yesterday: "There are no drug dealers here. It all goes on next door. I've been here for five years and although things seem to be getting better Crown House is still the target for a lot of police activity over drugs."

Avon and Somerset Police confirmed the area was a drugs

blackspot. A spokesman said: "We are aware of problems." Jonathon Upton, of Halifax Properties, played down the advert. "I understand there was some kind of mistake in the ad, but it doesn't seem to have put off prospective buyers. I am told the schools near by are good and it is generally seen as a nice, quiet area."

'Herd instinct' rules stock market

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

THE STOCK MARKET is ruled as much by the "herd instinct" of traders, as any rational assessment of a company's worth, scientists have found.

The assessment, based on mathematical assumptions more familiar to physicists, has revealed that stock markets are a fundamentally irrational enterprise. Thomas Lux, professor

of economics at the University of Bonn, and Michele Marchesi of the University of Cagliari in Italy, show in the journal *Nature* that some traders exert a significant influence on share prices by merely following the crowd. The researchers found that

and patterns and also consider the behaviour of other traders as a source of information, which results in a tendency towards herding behaviour," the researchers say.

Within this group there are pessimists, who will sell shares irrationally and optimists, who will buy them for the same illogical reasons.

PRODUCT RECALL

RECALL OF PRESCRIBED CALPOL PAEDIATRIC SUSPENSION

A product recall has been issued by Warner-Lambert Consumer Healthcare concerning the following two prescription medicines:

Calpol Paediatric Suspension and Calpol Paediatric Sugar Free Suspension

The recalled products are only available on prescription from your doctor in individually dispensed and labelled bottles.

The paracetamol in the affected bottles has shown some signs of separation, which may have resulted in an increased paracetamol level in the surface layer.

If the product was shaken as directed prior to consumption, there should be no safety issue.

As a precautionary measure, if you have received a prescribed version of Calpol or another pink paracetamol suspension since the 1st of December 1998, DO NOT USE THIS PRODUCT. Please return the product to the pharmacist who dispensed it, as soon as possible.

If any of this product has been given to your child in the last 2-3 days or if you are in any way concerned, please speak to your doctor immediately.

This recall does not affect the following Calpol variants sold directly to the public by pharmacies i.e. sold without a prescription, in a purple carton:

Calpol Infant Suspension 70ml, 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Sugar Free Infant Suspension 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Six Plus and Calpol Six Plus Sugar Free Colour Free 100ml

Warner-Lambert is committed to providing safe and effective products to our patients. As part of that commitment, we are working with the Medicines Control Agency to ensure that this recall is accomplished as quickly as possible. We regret the necessity of this action and any inconvenience it may cause. We believe this action represents the appropriate precautionary measure. If you need further information, please call our Advisory Helpline: 0800 389 3897.



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2-3 Bedroom Semi-detached house	For around £550	For around £350
4 Bedroom Semi-detached house	For around £800	For around £400
3 Bedroom detached house	For around £550	For around £250
4 Bedroom detached house	For around £750	For around £550

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IND 3

Only one rail operator is hitting its targets

ONLY ONE train company in Britain is hitting the performance targets demanded by the Government, according to figures that reveal yet another stumper in punctuality.

Under a new system of giving the 25 privatised train companies an exam-style A to E grade, only the tiny but heavily-subsidised Island Line deserved the top mark. Another seven companies got a B with the remaining 17 classed as either mediocre or failing.

One operator, Silverlink, was awarded an E grade because of poor reliability.

Train operators are given grades for punctuality and reliability and the overall mark is the lower of the two. To qualify for an A for punctuality, operators must run at least 95 per cent of their trains on time, 90 per cent for a B, 85 per cent for a C and so on. Reliability is based on the number of trains cancelled, with an A grade for 99.5 per cent of services run, and 99 per cent for B.

Island Line, an 8.5-mile-long line on the Isle of Wight, won an A for running 95.6 per cent of trains on time and cancelling only 0.4 per cent. But figures published by the Office of Passenger Franchising (Opfa) show it receives £3.2m in taxpayer subsidy for every passenger mile – equivalent to £2.82 for every journey made. This could make it cheaper to

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

hire a taxi for each passenger.

By contrast, Gatwick Express, the airport shuttle which won a B, pays back to the Treasury 7.7p per mile – an average rebate of £2.22 per journey.

The detailed figures showed time-keeping worsened on more than half the network compared with a year ago with 45 route groups declining, 29 im-

proving and three staying the same. Reliability was better with 37 improving, 31 declining and nine stable.

The regional breakdown revealed some dramatic falls. Punctuality on Birmingham's Cross City North trains plunged 12 per cent to 74.3 per cent. In the month to November 12, Connex only managed to run 66 per cent of its Kent Link trains on time. ScotRail was the best major operator

with 95.9 per cent punctuality and 99.4 per cent reliability.

The Government condemned the performance as "disappointing". John Reid, the Transport Minister, said: "Passengers are getting a poor service and this is unacceptable."

The new league table highlights more clearly than before which train operators are performing well and those who must try harder if they want a future in the rail industry."

John O'Brien, the Franchising Director, said: "Punctuality remains poor. The results are not good enough, and year on year results do not yet point to a widespread improvement."

The Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, a passenger watchdog, said the performance by companies on some routes was "truly awful".

The Association of Train Operating Companies said they were working hard to improve reliability and timekeeping while managing the "massive" growth in passengers and extra trains.

James Gordon, Atoc director general, said: "Punctuality is proving a hard nut to crack in the face of such unprecedented growth. The fruits of the massive investment programme are beginning to come through but it will be some time before we see dramatic improvements."

Silverlink condemned the new system as misleading. Its managing director, Charles Belcher, said he was given an E grade because problems with train reliability on one stretch of line wiped out a B grade for punctuality.

WARNINGS THAT WENT IGNORED

DESPITE warnings, a change of Government, a new political agenda, and plans for a new regulator, almost nothing has changed.

■ South West Trains escapes £1m fine for cancellations: "You cannot achieve [your] objectives by taking a narrow and parochial view of your business and by standing on strict letter of your legal contracts and obligations." John Swift, OC, Rail Regulator, letter to rail companies, June 1 1997

■ Figures show trains later than British Rail:

"Passengers deserve much better, bearing in mind the £1.8bn from taxpayers going into the privatised railway." John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, May 11, 1998

■ Complaints hit one million: "This shows how far rail operators still have to go to meet passenger expectations." Gavin Strang, Transport Minister, July 7

■ "This isn't a case of it's not broke, so don't fix it." It is broke, I intend to fix it and the passengers are going to be at the forefront of my concern." John Prescott, August 13

■ Figures show trains later than British Rail:



Company	Punctuality %	Reliability %	Subsidy p
A -	95.0	99.6	63.2
ScotRail	95.9	99.4	21.2
Merseyrail Electrics	95.3	99.2	36.5
Central	93.1	99.5	22.7
Anglia	92.0	99.5	7.6
B -	91.2	99.1	3.6
WAGN	90.8	99.6	1.5
Great Eastern	90.8	99.6	-7.7
Gatwick Express	90.1	99.6	
C -	94.0	98.5	6.0
TTS Rail	93.3	98.9	23.7
Northumbrian Spire	91.2	98.6	13.4
Wales & West	90.0	98.9	4.1
Connex South Central	89.9	98.5	-1.1
Thameslink	89.8	99.8	0.5
Midland Mainline	89.5	99.4	2.9
South West Trains	89.5	99.2	1.7
Great North Eastern	88.3	99.2	-5.8
Chiltern	86.4	99.4	
West Coast	85.9	99.4	3.4
D -	90.9	98.2	35.5
North Western Trains	86.3	98.1	33.0
Cardiff Railways	84.5	99.0	4.0
Great Western	83.8	98.7	4.9
Connex South Eastern	82.7	98.6	5.1
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Source: Office of Passenger Rail Franchising Subsidy - per passenger mile

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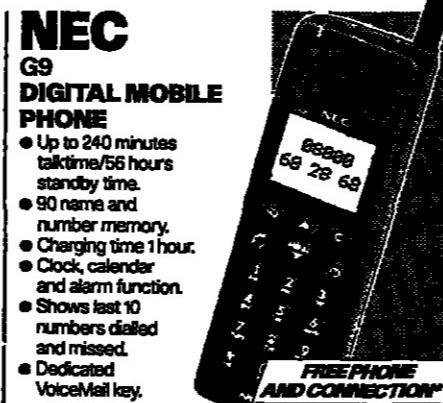
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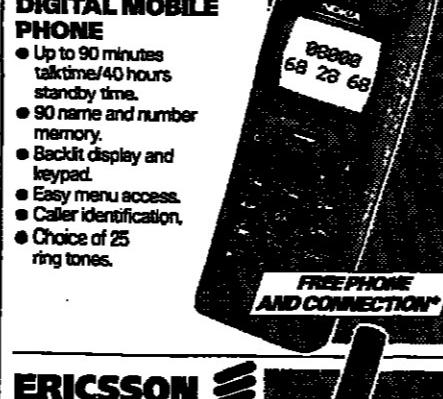
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'Baby hearts used for experiments'

A HOSPITAL at the centre of a scandal over failed heart operations removed organs from some of the children who did not survive and kept them for research without telling their parents. A total of about 180 hearts are thought to have been removed and kept after unsuccessful operations at the Bristol Royal Infirmary between 1983 and 1995.

An investigation into children's heart surgery at the hospital found seriously high rates

BY LOUISE JURY

of mortality and brain damage. Two surgeons, James Wisbech and Janardan Dhasmana, and John Roylance, who ran the Bristol United Healthcare Trust, were found guilty of serious professional misconduct. Dr Roylance yesterday launched an appeal against being struck off the medical register.

With a public inquiry due to start next month, solicitors for the parents of the children said

they were very surprised not to have learnt of the practice of keeping organs until now, but they understood it was happening nationwide. The organs were kept after post-mortem examinations.

Maureen Willis, chair of the Bristol Children's Heart Action Group, said the disclosure would cause great distress: "It was known that hearts had been retained without knowledge or consent in isolated cases. But the trust had not made us aware until

now that hearts had been retained systematically. The shock and sorrow this disclosure will cause to parents is incalculable."

The trust has asked the action group, which represents around 300 families largely from the South-west and south Wales, for help in contacting families concerned.

Laurence Vick, leading solicitor for the group at the inquiry due to open on 16 March, said given events at the hospital and the scandal surrounding

it, it was surprising it had taken so long for this to emerge.

Helen Rickard, 32, of Bristol, said she believed she was the first parent to discover that her child's heart had been kept by the hospital. Her daughter Samantha died aged 11 months after an operation in February 1992. It was only in May 1996, when she was examining Samantha's medical records, that she learnt the truth: "It was a great shock and I was very distressed," she said. The hospital

apologised and returned the organ, which she now proposes to donate for research.

A spokeswoman for the Bristol Royal Infirmary said the matter would be raised at the public inquiry. "We acknowledge there will be distress and we regret that." But she said the majority of post-mortem examinations were requested by the coroner and there was no legal requirement for parents' consent to be obtained in those circumstances.

Nicholas Harvey, Liberal Democrat MP for North Devon, who has constituents affected by the Bristol scandal, said that he would ask Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, for a review of laws governing the removal of organs from dead patients.

"The tragic story of babies' deaths at the BRI just gets worse and worse. It's extremely upsetting for the parents of babies who died," he said.

Dr John Roylance, former

chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare Trust, yesterday began an appeal before the judicial committee of the Privy Council against being struck off.

Robert Francis QC, for Dr Roylance, said that Sir Donald Irvine, the chairman of the General Medical Council which conducted the disciplinary hearing, had failed to disclose that his own grandchild was being treated for a heart condition.

Master quits hunt named in cruelty allegations

BY KIM SENGUPTA

ONE OF the masters of a prestigious hunt accused of trapping foxes alive so they can be used for sport has announced he is giving up his position.

Major John Shaw's retirement from the Sissington Hunt was revealed to members days after *The Independent* revealed the hunt was facing a fresh investigation into allegations that an artificial fox earth was found on its land. They were also told that a terrierman with the hunt will not have his contract renewed.

Nine months ago, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals rescued a pair of three-month-old cubs, with their ears mutilated, from the hunt's land in North Yorkshire. Last month, the RSPCA began another investigation after photographs and videos were produced, allegedly showing evidence of an artificial earth in the area.

The RSPCA dropped the prosecution over the cubs in December last year because it said it did not have enough evidence. Major Shaw was questioned along with the terrierman and the two other

Hunt is during foxes for the kill'

and the caption: "Latest from Sissington pantomime productions, Puss in Bits".

A month earlier, Ryedale District Council ordered the hunt to remove an incinerator used for animal carcasses, which it said had been causing air pollution.

The RSPCA dropped the prosecution over the cubs in December last year because it said it did not have enough evidence. Major Shaw was questioned along with the terrierman and the two other



The Sissington Hunt from which Major Shaw has retired as master. Top left: How 'The Independent' revealed it was facing a new investigation

joint masters Andrew Osborne and Adam Waugh. They all denied any involvement in the matter.

Prior to his resignation Major Shaw had been associated with the hunt most of his life. His father was a master of the hunt before him. He refused to make any comment yesterday,

referring inquiries to the Countryside Alliance. A source close to the hunt said he expects to continue riding as a member.

There is no suggestion that Major Shaw was in any way involved in the allegations over the fox cubs or the artificial earth.

According to the source he had demanded that the matters be fully investigated.

The RSPCA said last night:

"It is clear that after a number of embarrassing incidents involving the Sissington Hunt Major Shaw had decided to loosen his links with the hunt.

"If other huntmasters

around the country applied the same standards we would see lots of other retirements and resignations."

Last night, Major James Holt, chairman of Sissington Hunt committee said: "The hunt committee does not employ the terrierman, that is done by the masters."

"I would not like to speculate about the reason for Major Shaw's resignation, but from the letter he sent me it appears to be a financial one. I am not aware he is embarrassed by the hunt. As a hunt, we do seem to get much more than our fair share of adverse publicity and a lot of it is unwarranted."

Shelley Fox wins fashion award

BY MELANIE RICKETT
Fashion Writer

THE FIRST major prize dedicated to giving young British designers a kick-start in the fashion industry was awarded last night by the Jerwood Foundation to London-based Shelley Fox.

The award, worth £125,000, includes a cash prize of £20,000, a retail order with the London department store Liberty worth £25,000, sponsorship for two London Fashion Week collections, a £50,000 interest-free loan and a free studio for one year. In short, a dream come true for the 32-year-old Scunthorpe-born designer who has struggled against the odds to keep her business afloat.

This is the first time the first involvement in fashion for the Jerwood Foundation, launched in 1997 by the late John Jerwood to offer dedicated and responsible funding and sponsorship to the arts, sciences and cultural arena. It has run a prize for artists since 1994 and for film scriptwriters since 1998.

Shelley Fox graduated in 1996 from Central Saint Martins and her first collection was picked up by Liberty. "My clothes ... are about a feeling. Anyone can wear them because they are not fitted to the body in an obvious way. Rather the garment gives the body definition," she has said.

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A big grin from the PM as he delivers his catchphrase

THE PHRASE "boom and bust" now has the same status in Tony Blair's question-time sessions as the portly outline of Alfred Hitchcock did in that director's films. Aficionados know for certain that it will turn up at some point - indeed, that without it, a vital token of authenticity will be missing.

The little ritual became something of a trial for Hitchcock himself, who placed his cameo appearances closer and closer to the beginning of his films as his career progressed - anxious to get the trivial distraction out of the way so that the audience would settle down and start paying attention. For

Mr Blair the procedure is quite the opposite - he values his trademark's capacity to induce a temporary amnesia in the audience and likes to toy with their mounting sense of anticipation.

He can be quite sly about this - last week, for instance, he used "boom and bust" in his very first sentence, as though he'd decided not to tease them at all, but then he surprised fans of the alliterative double act by bringing them on for an encore in his final sentence.

Yesterday he held out for quite some time - though this wasn't entirely a matter of choice. William Hague, so lacklustre last week,

had been invigorated by a tonic - the Foreign Affairs Committee's report on the Sandline affair, a spicy tincture of evidentiary hearings which has got the blood singing in the Opposition leader's veins. Mr Blair shook his head sadly as Mr Hague detailed the gravity of the charges against civil servant and minister. Obviously no prospect of getting "boom and bust" in here - it would be like Hitchcock trying to insinuate himself into a passing line of schoolgirls, by dressing in a pinafore frock and pigtail.

Mr Hague had a following wind as far as the Sandline report was concerned, but he ran up all his sails

and used every breath of it, bearing down on the Prime Minister in a way which seemed to rally the mutinous swabs on the lower decks.

Tory backbenchers to yelp like leashed hounds that have scented a fox (the vehemence with which they shout "Answer! Answer!" acts as a pretty accurate register of the sharpness of the question being avoided). "I hope he hasn't done his own self-assessment, or he's going to be in trouble", mocked Mr Hague and the pack howled even louder.

But then Mr Hague raised the issue of election tax promises, inviting Mr Blair to tell the House "how much taxes have risen since he took office"? At first Mr Blair blustered about Labour tax cuts, provoking

fists, perhaps having made a successful spread bet on the particular minute at which the Prime Minister's signature slogan would finally make its entrance.

As Mr Blair sat down he was still chuckling, probably gleefully amazed that it should be so easy. He had flagrantly dodged two sharp questions from Paddy Ashdown, casually dismissed a humiliating report from an all-party committee and side-stepped several bullish charges from the Opposition leader and yet the mood (at least on the opposition benches) was one of amiable hilarity. No more boom and bust? Lots more, I would guess.

Blair accused of arrogance on arms report

TONY BLAIR came under fierce Tory attack for his "arrogance and contempt" yesterday after he dismissed the findings of a Labour-dominated Commons committee on the arms-to-Sierra Leone affair as "disproportionate and unfair".

William Hague, the Tory leader, accused the Prime Minister during question time of failing to take responsibility, even though the damning report had described "failure at every level of the Foreign Office".

In a highly critical report, the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs said the Foreign Secretary's most senior official, Sir John Kerr, had "failed in his duty to ministers" and should be held responsible for the debacle. The investigation was launched after British mercenaries shipped arms in breach of a UN ban, with the apparent knowledge of some officials.

In angry exchanges, Mr Blair stressed that at the time of the affair in 1998, when rebels were trying to take power in Sierra Leone, the Government was being urged to provide more help to the democratically elected regime. "It is important

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

not to, with the benefit of hindsight, apply counsels of perfection when we take account of the context of the time, are not fully justified" he said.

But Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, urged Mr Blair to support German proposals to publish the European Union's arms control code of conduct report so that "these scandals" would not happen again.

"Whilst the Government has been playing pass-the-parcel with the blame over the last year for this, the terrible tragedy in Sierra Leone has simply repeated itself. The rebels who were defeated by Sandline arms, have now been re-armed, apparently with the assistance of another British company," he said. "Unless and until we set up a proper international regime for the control of arms, these scandals will not end, they will go on, again and again and again."

Replying, Mr Blair said the Government had taken the lead in tightening arms sales both in

Britain and the EU. The real issue was not actually Sandline, or even the foreign affairs committee report, but what was done about the situation in Sierra Leone. Rebels had been re-armed by sources "wholly outside this country".

Launching his criticism, Mr Hague claimed the Government had dismissed the report before it was even published. He told Mr Blair: "You were saying that ministers should be exonerated before the report had even been published. If Robin Cook, not civil servants, is not to be held responsible for the condition of the Foreign Office, then who is?

"Isn't it actually a story of incompetence and half-truths and secrecy and contempt for parliament, for which the Foreign Secretary is responsible and for which you are responsible ... are you going to take the report seriously, or are you going to treat this House, its committees and their reports with complete arrogance?"

Mr Blair insisted that the Government would "respond carefully" to the committee's recommendations.

Daphne Hayes-Mojon, the Mayor of Lambeth, Elliott Bernard, the chairman of the South Bank Board and Kate Hoey, the Vauxhall MP, meeting at London's South Bank where they provisionally opened the Jubilee Garden, which is to be renovated

Tom Craig



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MP accuses family of plot to kill daughter

A BRADFORD Asian family employed private detectives, bounty hunters and hit men to seek out and kill their "once much-loved" daughter and her husband because she refused to marry the man of her parents' choice, a Labour backbencher said yesterday.

Ann Cryer, the MP for Keighley, told a silent Commons during a short debate on women's rights of Jack and Zena Briggs who had committed the "unforgivable crime of falling in love and ultimately marrying".

"Zena's fate had been sealed virtually from birth when her parents promised her to a first cousin in Pakistan, a young man she despised, regarded as arrogant, with no English, who treated women as beneath con-

WOMEN'S RIGHTS
BY SARAH SCHAEFER

tempt. Six years ago, when Jack and Zena decided to run away and marry they knew there would be problems but hoped that eventually her family would accept Jack as his family accepted Zena.

To this day a death sentence is hanging over them and through the years this otherwise decent Bradford Asian family have employed private detectives, bounty hunters and hit men to seek out their once much-loved daughter for the purpose of killing her and her husband."

She added: "The question I have asked myself is, why are families prepared to go to these

lengths to force their daughters into such unsuitable marriages? The answer often given is that it is their culture and that outsiders such as myself should not interfere in what are essentially community and family matters. I cannot accept this view."

Condemning decisions by Muslim families to circumcise their daughters, Bowen Wells, chairman of the international development select committee and Tory MP for Hertford, confirmed that Harley Street had been mentioned as "being a place where this has been carried out". He added: "We in this country must be vigilant in stamping out these procedures. It is against the law of this country."

Schools chief defends his style

EDUCATION
BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

CHRIS WOODHEAD, the Chief Inspector of Schools, was yesterday challenged by MPs about criticism that his personal style is too combinatorial.

Critics have suggested that his forthright views about teachers and schools depress the profession's morale. But Mr Woodhead told the Commons Education Select Committee that the work of his office (ofsted) in discovering and publicising schools' weaknesses had helped raise standards. Morale was not helped by drawing a veil over mediocrity, he said.

The chief inspector, who was appearing before the committee days after he had to apologise for remarks about teacher-pupil sexual relationships, said his "blunt" style would not change. "It is necessary that the message which emerges from inspections should be communicated with absolute clarity," he argued.

He dismissed a suggestion that a supervisory board would make Ofsted more accountable, arguing he was answerable to Parliament through this committee, to the Prime Minister and to the Public Accounts Committee, and a board would "blur" his personal responsibility.

Morgan denies 'coup'

THE LABOUR backbencher Rhodri Morgan yesterday dismissed as "desperate" claims that he would stage a backroom coup to install himself as First Secretary of Wales.

Mr Morgan spoke out amid speculation that Plaid Cymru and rebel Labour members of the Welsh Assembly would team up to elect him even if he lost the Labour leadership contest to Alun Michael, the Secretary of State for Wales.

The row broke out as it

emerged that another major trade union had voted to give the Cardiff West MP its support in the increasingly bitter contest to lead the party in the Assembly in May. The Manufacturing Science Finance union has voted by a clear majority for Mr Morgan, adding to backing already given by Unison and the Fire Brigades Union.

However, the MP yesterday played down suggestions that he would stage a coup similar to that which saw Ken Livingstone take over the GLC in the 1980s.

One Labour party source said: "Rhodri wants this job one way or another ... a Red Ken scenario is not implausible."

Mr Morgan dismissed the idea as "pure dirty tricks" on the part of his opponents but refused to reject the idea. "I am focused on victory and nothing else," he said.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

said the Agriculture minister, Lord Donoughue.

Arts 'desperation'

MUSEUMS, OPERA, theatre and film had to be on the verge of collapse before they received Government help, the Earl of Gowrie, a former Arts Council chairman, said.

Taxing time

WILLIAM HAGUE said taxes had gone up £5.8bn, £280 for every taxpayer; in pension taxes, in petrol taxes and in mortgage taxes, as a result of the last two budgets.

GM attack

JACK CUNNINGHAM, the Cabinet Office Minister, called William Hague irresponsible for backing a moratorium on genetically modified crops. Britain's biotechnology expertise could bring big benefits for

health and agriculture.

THE HOUSE



MPs on hate-list
THE NAMES of 52 MPs are on an anti-abortion website listing details of "baby butchers", the Labour MP Ann Clwyd said.

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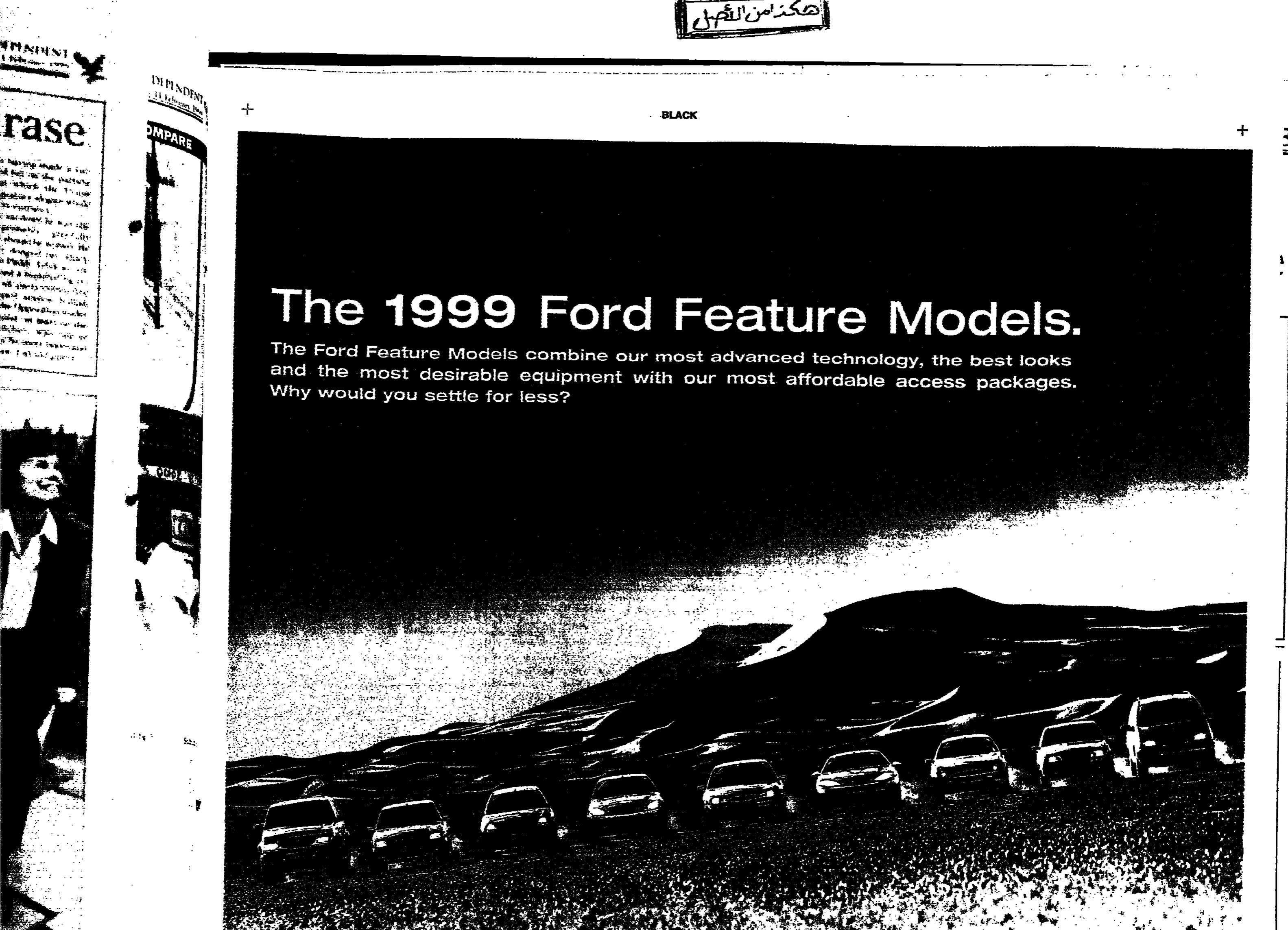
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Ford Focus



Ford Dealers

Amazon took cash for positive reviews

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

AMAZON.COM, the online bookshop which has been the darling of the media and the stock market for the past year, has admitted that it accepts cash in return for endorsing products. The company has also removed an invented review of a forthcoming biography on Monica Lewinsky from its site, raising questions about its reliability.

The embarrassing setbacks come as the stock market rethinks its love affair with the Internet and other electronic traders also hit problems. E-commerce is coming of age in the US, and it is proving painful.

Amazon.com lists thousands of books on its website, with comments and recommendations, as well as a best-seller list. Customers can buy these electronically and have them delivered. For the past year, it has been the subject of endless fascination in the world media as the prototype of a new company, one that exists only electronically. It has succeeded in generating a sense of commun-



nity with intelligent reviews and a well-composed site.

But some of the magic has been dissipated by news of how the reviews end up on Amazon.com's pages. The company

has been soliciting payments of up to \$10,000 for prominent placement of books in what it calls "co-operative" arrangements. Companies representing books such as John

Grisham's *The Testament* paid for prominent coverage, including e-mail alerts to customers. The company responded swiftly, offering refunds to everyone who had

REVIEW WAS MADE UP

Praise for Andrew Morton's *Monica's Story* on Amazon's website raised eyebrows mainly because the book had not been published. "I thought I knew it all, but *Monica's Story* blew me away," wrote Peter Feld, who later admitted he had invented the review. It was subsequently removed from the site. But yesterday, another review had appeared, under the name of Boygeorge@yahoo.com from Oval Office, DC. He gave it one star out of five, saying: "It blows. No cigar. No blue dress. Just yap, yap, yap about some cheesecake she ate last night." That, too, was removed within hours.



bought one of the recommended books. From next month, it will list which features on its pages are paid for.

It emphasised that it could refuse to feature books if it did

not consider them suitable. "We have the largest staff of book editors online or off, and for a book that doesn't meet our standards, there is no amount of money that would cause us

to feature it," said Jeff Bezos, the founder.

But the financial side of Amazon.com has also raised questions. It is a huge business, with 4.7 million books sold, 6.2 million customers and \$1bn in business last year. The company's stock went from \$9 to \$99 as investors went crazy over the prospects for e-commerce, giving it a value of over \$25bn.

Yet its losses actually increased last year, and it is unlikely to make a profit until 2001. Since the beginning of this year, the stock has halved in value. Some investment firms have limited the amount of cash which investors could bor-

row to gamble on e-stocks.

It is not the only company facing problems. E-Trade, the online brokerage, is being sued after its trading system crashed four times. And Buy.com, an online retailer, lost more than \$60,000 after putting the wrong price on a computer monitor.

Partly, these are problems of success. The online services have grown so rapidly that they are having trouble keeping up. But it is also a problem of age. The United States is ceasing to see online commerce as a fascinating toy, and starting to treat it seriously, not always to the companies' benefit.

Internet on TV coming to Sky sets

By PAUL MCCANN
Media Editor

casting it will be in a million homes by autumn. On top of the e-mail system, Sky Digital subscribers will be able to play interactive games on screen, access bank accounts, and book theatre and concert tickets.

As well as the three retailers announced yesterday, subscribers will be able to shop at Woolworths and Iceland, and Open is looking to sign up music and video retailers, travel companies and health and beauty stores. The home shopping system just needs a normal remote control and for viewers to connect their telephone line to the back of a Sky Digital set-top box. Food, videos or tickets can be bought by selecting from on-screen menus.

The system will remember what you buy regularly and ask if you want it again. Goods can be paid for by credit card or by setting up a virtual bank account with HSBC. Other charges will include the price of phone calls to order products, but browsing around the home shopping channels will be free. "We envision families being able to sit down and choose presents for this Christmas through their television sets," said a company spokesman.

Interactive television should be a reality by spring with a full service available in one million households by autumn. Yesterday BSkyB said it had signed up 350,000 households to its digital service since it launched in October. It is fore-

seen that the system will make it possible for the entire population to have their own e-mail address.

BSkyB interim results, Business, page 18

IN BRIEF

Cannibal killer jailed for life

A KILLER who cooked and ate part of his victim was jailed for life yesterday after pleading guilty to manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility. Teesside Crown Court was told David Harker, 24, of Darlington, Co Durham, could kill again. Julie Paterson, 32, was strangled last April and her dismembered body found on wasteland.

Building society raids charges

CHRISTOPHER WOOD, 52, charged with committing 16 armed raids on building societies, was remanded in custody by magistrates in Tamworth, Staffordshire, yesterday. Mr Wood, of no fixed address, had already appeared in court facing 10 robbery-related charges.

Viagra users look for cheap thrill

DESPERATE VIAGRA users are chopping up their pills to save money, risking increased side-effects from the anti-impotence drug, according to a report in the GPs' newspaper Doctor. The side-effects include headaches, flushes and occasional visual disturbance.

Getty's Irish passport cost £1m

THE SON of John Paul Getty has bought an Irish passport for £1m in a scheme which considers investments made in the Republic and their job creation potential. The government was unable to specify how Tara Getty, 38, had contributed to the economy.

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Self-portraits by Rembrandt at age 23, 34 and 63; the works are among nearly 70 images to go on show at the National Gallery this summer

Rembrandt's face as never seen before

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

amination of his ageing features.

One portrait shows the artist at the foot of the cross taking part in the Crucifixion. Mr MacGregor said this was a statement that all humanity had to share responsibility. Another work shows Rembrandt in the pose of a famous portrait of a poet by Titian. This, said Mr MacGregor, was a declaration that the painter could explore emotions, love and tragedy as much as the poet.

No artist before or since Rembrandt has portrayed himself with such obsessive frequency, leaving 70 images – paintings, drawings and etchings.

The National Gallery has borrowed from public and private collections in Europe and the United States to assemble 30 paintings, 8 drawings and all 29 of the etchings.

They record Rembrandt's self-image from youthful insecurity to the booming self-confidence of his middle years and, in his late portraits, an ex-

Saskia in 1642, the number of self-portraits he painted declined dramatically. When he returned to painting himself, he often abandoned elaborate dress and glamorous poses to confront himself frankly as a working artist with brush and palette in hand.

Mr MacGregor said that in the late portraits and his observation of his own ageing features, "Rembrandt revels in his ability to sculpt the image in paint, engaging us in the very process of making a masterpiece. It was for such virtuous displays of painterly technique – as much as for his image that Rembrandt self-portraits were prized."

Also included in the exhibition are groups of self-portrait paintings and drawings by Rembrandt's pupils, revealing how his images influenced his followers.

The exhibition – *Rembrandt by Himself* – opens on 9 June and runs until 5 September.

Euro tax threat to UK art market

BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

that he saw "no possibility" that the European Commission might change its mind on the matter. "We have searched for allies as the previous government searched for allies," he said.

They have been warned that the impact of European Union taxes – and harmonisation of value added tax on arts, antiques and jewellery – will weaken the European market.

Although Britain opposes the harmonisation plan, other EU members, led by the German presidency, are expected to go ahead with the levy on 25 February.

The measure would raise VAT on the items from 2.5 per cent to 5 per cent in Britain by June this year. Even with the introduction in 1995 of a reduced rate of VAT, sales have fallen by nearly 30 per cent.

A second blow will come with the introduction in this country of the *droit de suite* levy, which for 70 years after an artist's death is charged at between 2 per cent and 4 per cent of every resale of the art work other than sales between individuals. The money, after administration costs, is given to the artist's family.

While the change will benefit artists, it could drive dealers out of the EU altogether and build up rival centres such as New York and Geneva where no such taxes apply.

The British Art Foundation has warned that London's pivotal position in the global art scene, where it holds about 40 per cent of all art sales and employs 40,000 people, will be destroyed at a stroke.

Kim Howells, the Trade and Industry minister, admitted

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Fugitive snuffed out by halitosis

BY CLARE GARNER

began when Constable Keith Booth was called to the garden centre at 2.30am on 16 July last year and saw a man running away. "Barney started chasing and was slowly but surely catching up with him as they ran towards the river," he said.

"I was following close behind, but as I reached the river bank there was an eerie silence. You could feel the stillness. It appeared that the man had simply vanished into thin air."

Details of the bizarre arrest emerged yesterday, when Jones, 19, from Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, appeared in the local magistrates' court. He was released on unconditional bail after admitting to burgling a B&Q garden centre in Stoke-on-Trent and stealing equipment worth £400.

The chase which ended in the underwater escapade

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The farce of teenagers plucked from a football pitch and forced into battle

BY LUCY HANNAN
in Asmara

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Dowit Admas says he was playing football in Gondar High School, northern Ethiopia, when three government soldiers rounded up 60 boys and took them to Bersheka Military Training Camp in Gojam. "They told us Eritrea had taken our land, Badme, and we had to take it back."

Dowit - who attracts attention with his inexplicable sense of humour at becoming a prisoner-of-war - says he was taught how to handle an assault rifle for three months and was then sent to the front line last Friday.

Though he laughs when he recounts how he was "caught asleep" by Eritrean soldiers in Badme, the facts are tragic. Young, inexperienced and terrified of the heavy shelling, he was sent forward as a foot soldier ahead of Ethiopia's tanks. He carried a Kalashnikov rifle, a few rounds of ammunition, and two hand grenades. Having walked for 14 hours without food or water - and with no shelters to take cover in the exposed valley - he collapsed exhausted, along with other members of the Ethiopian 34 Brigade. Of the first 670 foot soldiers to reach the Eritrean defence trenches that Friday, most were killed or wounded, says the prisoners.

"Most of us were dying, or so tired we were sitting," said fellow prisoner Abebe Yeigalem, 20. "Our leader had disappeared, and we didn't know what to do because we've never fought before." Arriving at night for an assault on Eritrean-held Badme, Abebe vividly describes a massacre of the second section of the brigade: "More than 600 of us were destroyed. I saw dying and wounded and fleeing."

Dowit was "woken up" by Eritrean soldiers who had encircled the decimated brigade and, at the time convinced he would be executed, is now surprised to find himself one of the youngest POWs in a temporary camp just outside Asmara.

Of the 99 POWs held in a large warehouse, 61 prisoners are army rank and file and the others militia and former demobilised soldiers. They are being fed local vegetable and meat dishes provided by a hotel service from the capital, and have blankets donated by the Eritrean government.

All dressed in camouflage, they squat in groups of eight around a communal dish of local food, before filing out for a head count in the courtyard. They come from many parts of Ethiopia, although the majority are from ethnic groups in northern Ethiopia - Amharas and Tigrayans.

No access has yet been given to international humanitarian organisations. A source at the International Committee of the Red Cross said the organisation had not been able to



Tsigist Hagos, 8, and her father recovering in hospital this week after an Ethiopian shell landed on a wedding party in Adi Quala, Eritrea

Photographs: Sven Salinen/AP

get general access to all POWs in Eritrea since last June, but had participated in the release of 70 POWs in September.

Many tell stories of forced recruitment, from homes, schools and farms over the past three months. Alemayehu Shiferu, 17, from Arba Minch, south-western Ethiopia, says he joined voluntar-

ily because all his friends had gone to the military camp. Different ethnic groups are trained in different camps, say the prisoners, under Ethiopia's ethnically based regionalisation.

Tewolde Akiem, 24, is from Tigray, where the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi led the Tigray People's Liber-

ation Front (TPLF) to victory - and to the core of the government. Also forcibly recruited from his farm and taken to Kobo training camp in Tigray, Tewolde was told it was his duty to fight for Badme.

According to individual accounts by this group of POWs, Ethiopian soldiers were mobilised for assault on Friday morning, the day Ethiopia claimed Eritrea started the war by carrying out an aerial bombardment of the northern town of Adi Gra. To date, no independent confirmation has been made of

this claim. Through intense radio and television propaganda, both Ethiopia and Eritrea have adamantly denied starting the war; simultaneously blaming each other for breaking the air-strike moratorium at the disputed border and failing to stick by an internationally brokered peace policy.

■ Fighting on the Ethiopian-Eritrean border came to an apparent halt yesterday, but Eritrean officials strongly denied there was a "de facto ceasefire" in place. A presidential advisor said Ethiopia had been "battered" over the past few days when it attacked Eritrean positions in Badme, Tsiroona and Zel Ambessa, and the hill was tactical. The official, Yemane Gebre Meskal, welcomed United States and United Nations calls for restraint, saying it was a recognition that Ethiopia was responsible for breaking the air-strike moratorium.

Dowit Admas, 17, at the Eritrean POW camp

praised Americans for their good sense in being able to tell "a sin from a crime". At least one Republican, Slade Gorton, said - according to a script released afterwards - that he would vote "not guilty" on perjury, but would vote to remove the President on obstruction of justice. Such a pattern supported the view that the perjury charge could fail to attract a simple "guilty" majority.

By late yesterday however, the balance seemed to have shifted, with more senators convinced of the President's perjury than of his intention to obstruct justice, which opened the prospect that neither charge would win even a simple majority - leaving right-wing Republicans, and especially the House of Representatives prosecutors, routed.

With the final vote as little as a day away, even a formal censure of the President seemed to be losing ground. Larry Craig, an Idaho Republican, described it yesterday as a "rose that is beginning to wilt" and commented that Democratic support for censure stemmed chiefly from their desire to "seek cover" for their acquittal vote. Republicans say impeachment by the House of Representatives is the most damning censure there can be, so why string out proceedings with artificial condemnations?

Clinton close to victory as trial heads for early finish

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

AS THE United States Senate continued its closed-door deliberations on the fate of President Bill Clinton yesterday, the long-awaited end of the four-week impeachment trial finally loomed into sight.

The leader of the Republican majority, Trent Lott, said that he was aiming, "if at all possible", to set the final vote for 5pm this afternoon - a day earlier than planned, with Friday held in reserve if there were still senators wanting to speak.

With the final chapter well under way, President Clinton appeared to be cruising securely towards victory, and senatorial solidarity was starting to break down. Opponents of

praised Americans for their good sense in being able to tell "a sin from a crime".

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WHY BOYS ARE BEING PRESS-GANGED INTO WAR

Who are the combatants? Ethiopia and Eritrea are neighbouring countries - in the impoverished Horn of Africa - with long and tangled histories. Both were part of Italian East Africa at the start of the Second World War. In 1952 they were federated, before Eritrea was made a province of Ethiopia in 1962. After a long war, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) won control in 1991, and Eritrea gained formal independence in 1993.

So when did the new war start?

In May 1998, when Eritrea sent tanks into a disputed slice of territory around the border town of Badme. The fighting fizzled out after six weeks, when both sides accepted a US proposal for a moratorium on air strikes.

Hostilities flared up again on 6 February, when Ethiopia launched attacks on three fronts, including Badme. Eritrea claims to be rolling back early enemy gains, but the overall picture is unclear

What are they fighting over?

Ostensibly over the "Badme triangle", a barren, strategically worthless area to which both Asmara and Addis Ababa can lay claim under conflicting colonial-era maps. But Ethiopia's true goal, it is widely suspected, is to regain the access to the Red Sea it lost when Eritrea became independent. The southern port of Assab, close to Eritrea's border with Djibouti, is the most likely target. But Ethiopia is not thought to be contemplating the reconquest of Eritrea in its entirety. That would

merely guarantee another protracted, unwinnable war.

Where do they get their weapons? From the usual suspects (sometimes with British intermediaries) especially the former Eastern bloc countries of Russia, Bulgaria and Romania, all desperate for hard currency. Russia is reported to have supplied both the belligerents with warplanes. Bulgaria is said to have sold Ethiopia elderly Soviet T-55 tanks. Romania has sold missiles and rockets to Eritrea. China is believed to have done to same for Ethiopia. The two may have spent \$400m between them on arms.

What is being done to stop the fighting? Both the US (of whom both Ethiopia and Eritrea are allies) and the Organisation for African Unity have put forward peace plans, but in vain. The main stumbling block is Eritrea's reluctance to withdraw from the positions it seized in Badme eight months ago. But intense national pride, and long military traditions on both sides could make this a tricky squabble to solve.



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A Blair 'begs' over Rover

THE new Blair the collector will tactic

The vitriolic editorial in *Bild Zeitung* illustrates German rage over the plight of the once-mighty BMW company, which has fallen on hard times since it invested in Britain. "The British Rover plants were scrap-heaps when BMW bought them in January 1994," it states. Since then, the Munich-based company had poured in "senseless billions".

But now Mr Blair has asked Chancellor Gerhard Schröder for his help. "Is the Chancellor supposed to hold a whip-round for the Britons?" *Bild* asks indignantly, not forgetting to mention that "Blair the Beggar" has proudly presented himself in the past as a standard-bearer for economic modernity in Europe.

BMW's tribulations – as they appear from Germany – have touched a raw nerve. The company lost its two most talented

BY IMRE KARACS

in Bonn

managers. Bernd Pischetsrieder, the chief executive, was sacked, because his British strategy was seen to have failed. His heir apparent, Wolfgang Reitzle, was thwarted by employee representatives on the board, who had been lobbied by British union leaders.

The car-maker now finds itself hunted by predators. Take-over rumours sweeping the markets are quashed by the billionaire Quandt family who own about half the shares. To Germans this all seems very unfair; especially when they hear that the British workers who they feel are responsible for the mayhem have somehow managed to save their skins.

The BBC has said it will close its German language World Service programmes after 50 years to make more use of the Internet and FM networks. Recent audience research showed that nine out of 10 Berliners listened in English.



Clean-up crews tackle oil leaking from the cargo ship 'New Carissa', which has been grounded near Coos Bay, Oregon, for a week

Jeff Barnard/AP

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Bronx seethes after shooting

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

who meets the British Opposition Leader, William Hague, here on Saturday, was the object of passionate denunciation at a rally of more than 1,000 people, almost all of them African Americans, outside City Hall on yesterday.

"If they can shoot anyone 41 times, they can shoot everyone 41 times," Mr Sharpton told the angry crowd. "It may start with blacks and Latinos but it will spread everywhere". He led the throng in chanting "No justice, no peace" as many waved banners accusing Mr Giuliani of condoning police brutality.

The shooting has become a symbol of the darker side of the zero-tolerance approach adopted under Mr Giuliani's administration, which has otherwise been credited with a drop in violent-crime rates. "This just shows how the police will shoot a black man for no reason," said Shahir Mack, one of the many children at the City Hall rally.

The victim's mother, Kadidou Diallo, flew to New York from Guinea and visited the Bronx apartment house where her son died.

Emerging from a black van, she fell to her knees before throngs of reporters and sympathisers wailing "Why? Why? Why?" She then stumbled to the building, repeatedly crying out "Amadou, Amadou, Amadou".

She and her husband, who is due here today, will take the body back to Guinea.

New York's Police Commissioner, Howard Safir, ordered his department to arrange refresher courses for street-crime units to instruct them on approaching suspects and determining whether or not they are armed and represent a genuine security threat.

Teletubby is secret gay, says evangelist

BY DAVID USBORNE
demeanour. Tinky Winky is in fact a covert gay role model, the article said.

Steve Rice, spokesman for The Itsy Bitsy Entertainment Company, which represents Teletubbies in the US, was emphatic: "To think we would be putting sexual innuendo in a children's show is kind of outlandish".

But the preacher's journal is convinced of the Teletubbies' orientation: "Tinky Winky is purple – the gay pride color; and his antenna is shaped like a triangle – the gay pride symbol."

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Royal intrigue cost Hassan his crown

CROWN PRINCE Hassan knew that the game of kings had ended the moment his brother landed at Amman's Queen Alia airport last month. There was a formal embrace from the man who had supposedly won his long battle with cancer. But King Hussein ignored Hassan's son, Rashed, and then showed what he thought of his Crown Prince by choosing to travel into the city not with Hassan – as was his normal routine – but alongside his wife, Queen Noor.

Hassan was left behind.

The man who had waited 34 years to be the king of Jordan was stunned. For weeks, he had heard the rumours that his days as crown prince were numbered; a Lebanese newspaper suggested that King Hussein believed that his younger brother was plotting a coup.

But the king had reassured Hassan only days earlier that he intended to make him regent. Hassan's desperate, melodramatic attempt to prove his good faith is already the talk of Amman.

He presented himself before the king and – according to impeccable sources – asked Hussein bluntly: "How have I offended you? Here is my gun. If I have been disloyal to you, please shoot me – but do not disgrace me."

The king ordered Hassan to take his gun back and re-assured him yet again.

When a similar account to this story appeared in the small Jordanian newspaper *Al-Majed*, its editor was accused of "insulting the monarch".

Jordan's authorities are sensitive to the slightest criticism of the royal family, but in the days that have followed the king's death it has been possible to put together an account of Crown Prince Hassan's fall from grace.

In fact, the sequel to his astonishing gesture with the gun was, if anything, even more striking. The king called Hassan to the royal palace late on 20 January to present him with his letter of dismissal. A photographer was waiting to snap Hassan handing over his insignia to the new crown prince – and now king – Abdullah. Hassan returned to his car without the time to read the document; driving away, he turned on the radio only to hear the contents of the unopened letter on the national news.

Many Jordanians feel that the manner of his dismissal was unnecessarily cruel.

As Crown Prince, Hassan had been ordered by the king to handle Jordan's development projects – a role that inevitably brought him into conflict with the government of the former prime minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, who is said to dislike Hassan personally. Premiers believed that Hassan trekked on their prerogatives – something he had no right to do

BY ROBERT FISK
in Amman

since the right of succession is the crown prince's only constitutional power.

Even before King Hussein's brave, hopeless insistence of his recovery on 19 January, the royal court had been awash with stories that the monarch was turning against his brother. First, the name of Abdullah would be mooted, then that of Hamzeh, his son by Queen Noor.

Hassan's concerns only increased when he realised the extent to which his communications were being monitored – for years, he had spoken half-jokingly, to visitors about



Queen Noor: Princess Sarvath risked her anger

the taps on his telephone.

In the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, King Hussein was told that Hassan had tried to fire the chief of staff of the army, that Hassan's Pakistani-born wife, Princess Sarvath, had gone so far as to change the carpets in the royal palace in anticipation of becoming queen.

The truth appears to be more prosaic.

At a cost of more than £3m, King Hussein had built a house for Field Marshal Abdul-Hafez Murei-Kaabeen, a very ugly but otherwise magnificent pile on top of a hill outside of Amman.

It was rumoured that Walid bin Talal, a Saudi millionaire, wanted to purchase the property for £1m but Crown Prince Hassan, after consultations with the king, told the Saudi that the property belonged to the field marshal. Hassan's response – which appears to have been in accordance with the king's wishes – nevertheless provoked the story that he wanted to remove the field marshal. And the king was not amused.

Then came the tale of the carpets. Hassan's home is a charming building once owned by the former British ambassador Sir Alec Kirkbride, but last year the Crown Prince decided that after years of neglect, the house should be refurbished, along with its adjoining offices. Princess Sarvath, so it is said, wanted to change the decoration in both house and the office. And a new story, as unfair as it appears to be untrue, went the rounds – that the princess was "changing the

royal palace" even before the sick king had died.

But Hassan could make dangerous mistakes.

Against the advice of his friends, he compromised before parliament with the suffering of Iraqi civilians under United Nations sanctions. The Iraqi government reacted angrily because it believed that Hassan had not given sufficient support to the regime, while the king reportedly complained that the crown prince had not been tough enough on the Iraqis.

Princess Sarvath was also widely believed to want to name her son, Rashed, as crown prince when Hassan became king – an idea that would inevitably anger Queen Noor. Those around the princess advised her to forget the notion but it seems that Hassan, too, continued to toy with the idea of naming his own son crown prince once he gained the throne.

In the first days of his own regency, Abdullah showed considerable generosity to his deposed uncle. He greeted him warmly and – when Hassan offered to hand over control of the six academic institutions that he ran – the new king insisted that Hassan should continue to administer the projects.

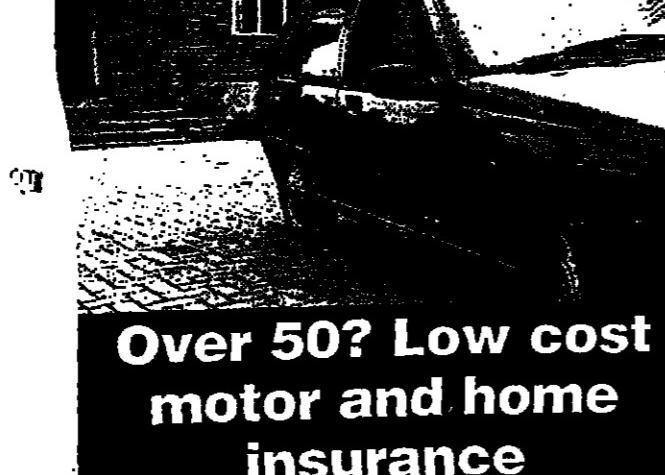
In a nation in which the monarchy is the one unifying bond, it is as well that the two men appear to get on well. More royal shenanigans, and Jordanians will be wondering what kind of royal family they have inherited.



The overlooked crown prince, Hassan, left, kisses King Abdullah. The new king is said to be treating his uncle well

Jerome Delay

Bronx seethes after shooting



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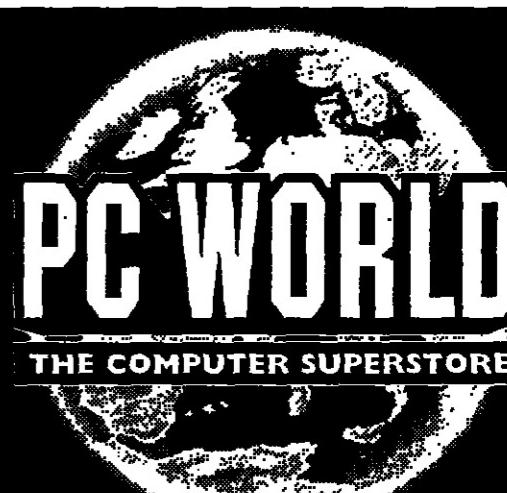
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THE INDEPENDENT
Thursday 11 February 1999

FOREIGN NEWS/17



Christians demonstrating at the funeral of Bishop John Joseph, who killed himself last year to protest against religious persecution in Pakistan

KM Chaudhry

claims China
ing up missiles

'Christian Taliban' take up arms

CHRISTIANS IN Pakistan are turning to violent militant movements in a bid to counter increasing sectarian attacks and discrimination. Community leaders fear this may lead to a civil war with Muslims.

Several Pakistani Christians claim to have infiltrated hard-line Islamic movements and to have spent months in training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan learning guerrilla tactics.

Others have joined the "Christian Taliban" or called for the formation of armed defence organisations modelled on extremist Muslim groups.

Christians suffer severe discrimination in Pakistan. They are effectively barred from many jobs, frequently harassed by the police and, in cities, con-

BY JASON BURKE
in Faisalabad

fined to ghettos. Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which impose death sentences for slandering Islam, result in frequent false accusations against them, many of which are upheld by the courts. Physical attacks are common, too. Earlier this year, a bomb was planted in a cathedral in the southern port city of Karachi.

Father Bonnie Mendes, a senior community leader, said Catholic church elders were deeply worried by the trend towards violence. "Young people are being forced into the hands of extremists who believe guns and bombs are the only way," he said. "We have to stress the

way of peace, justice and love. The (government) has to face up to realities and make changes, as we're heading for a very dangerous situation."

For some, however, the time for direct action has already come. One Christian from Faisalabad claimed recently to have been one of 35 Christians from all over Pakistan who had pretended to be Muslims so as to be trained by two extremist Islamic organisations.

Calling himself "Simon Mujahid" (freedom fighter) - mirroring the aliases taken by Muslim extremists who believe they are fighting a holy war - the man, in his 30s, said he had taken up arms because Christians in Pakistan needed to be able to defend themselves.

"Two other men came with me from Faisalabad and we spent several months training in the camps. Since coming back we have bought weapons so we are ready for any attack," he said.

Mujahid said that he decided that violence was necessary when the Catholic bishop John Joseph committed suicide in Faisalabad last year to publicise the case of a Christian sentenced to death for slandering Islam by supporting the British author Salman Rushdie.

A local reporter said he had visited Mujahid in the Christian ghetto in Faisalabad and had been shown a cache of automatic weapons and hand-guns.

There are other signs of the growing militancy among the Christians. In Peshawar, the

north-western city on the border with Afghanistan, religious leaders have formed a "Christian Taliban". The movement's aims are unclear but appear to be a mixture of self-defence and, in a clear copy of the original Taliban, the enforcement of a harsh moral code.

Even leaders of the community have been hinting at the use of force. Last year, Alexander Malik, the Bishop of Lahore, called for volunteers for a new organisation called the Sipah-e-Masih (Defenders of the Messiah). Two of the most feared Islamic organisations are the Sunni Muslim Sipah-e-Sihabah and the Sipah-e-Mohammed, which claim to fight for the rights of Shia Muslims.

Sources among church elders in Lahore said last week that the Sipah-e-Masih were "ready and waiting". Hardline Islamic groups have been linked to dozens of murders and bomb blasts. Thousands of people have died in sectarian violence in Pakistan over the past five years. Last month, Sunnis gunned down 17 worshippers at a Shia mosque, sparking a spate of tit-for-tat murders.

The government has instituted special anti-terrorism courts but neither these, nor a series of extra-judicial killings by police, appear to have had any effect. Critics say the government's bid to make Islamic law supreme has heightened religious feelings and increased intolerance.

so the press became almost as free as it could be in a developing country. The rulers tried to muzzle it but could not. They did not have enough votes in the parliament to revive the censorship laws.

But this all changed when Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party won a two-thirds majority in the 1997 elections. Although more than 65 per cent of people did not vote, Prime Minister Sharif presented this victory as "a heavy mandate" and set about accumulating as much power as possible. Members of parliament were deprived of the right to vote against the desires of their party leader. The powers of the president were curtailed.

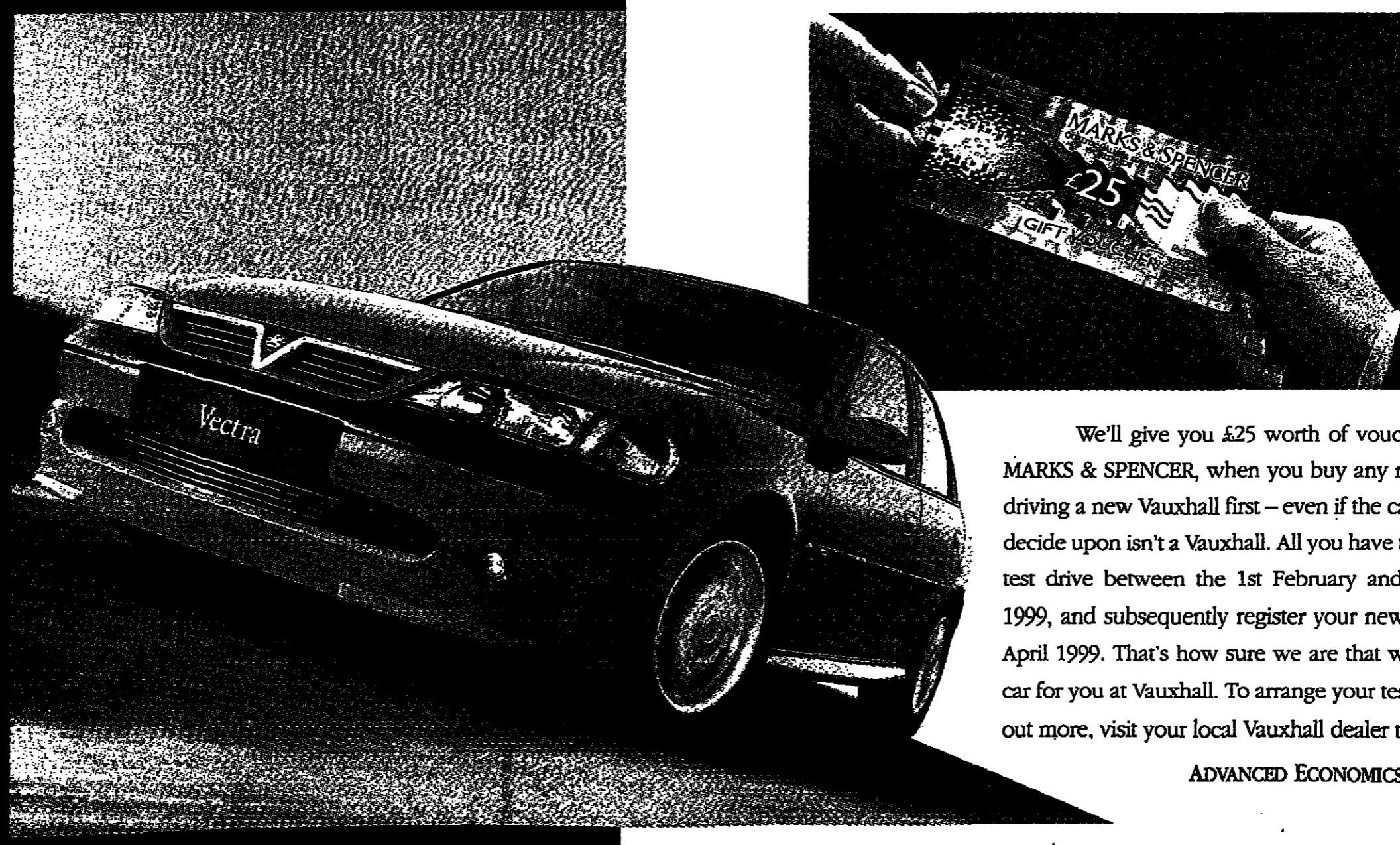
A tax dispute with the largest newspaper group, Jang, was used to fuel a campaign against the press. The proprietors were asked to sack the journalists who started following senior journalists. Journalists who protested were beaten.

But this did not discourage the journalists. They shielded individual colleagues to prevent arrests or beatings. They travelled together, ate together, slept in the same houses. Hundreds gathered outside the Jang office every night to brave the police batons trying to prevent the delivery of newsprint.

Their newspaper was reduced from 20 to four pages. But they did not give up. Their struggle is not about taxes, not pay. It is for a free press. So the struggle continues. With grey hair and long careers in journalism we are joining a younger generation in protesting "Down with dictators. Long live democracy."

ANWAR IQBAL
Anwar Iqbal is assistant editor of "The News" in Islamabad

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Property squeeze set to continue

THE SQUEEZE on the property market is set to continue in 1999 with just one in ten people looking to move home during the year, according to a survey by the Alliance & Leicester. The survey of 4,500 adults also shows that the number of homeowners wanting to move in the South-east fell from 11 per cent to just 7 per cent. The mortgage bank said the decline in the South-east was due to faltering confidence in the region, where 16 per cent felt less confident about the market than last year.

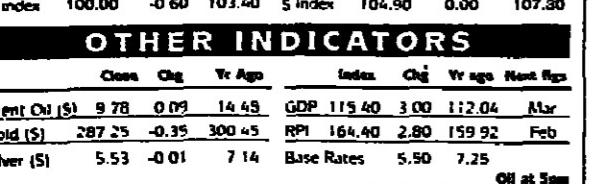
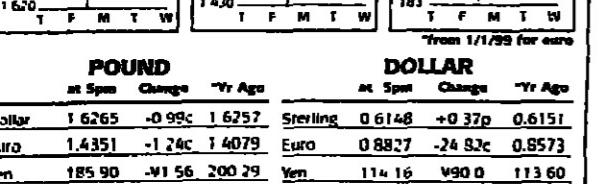
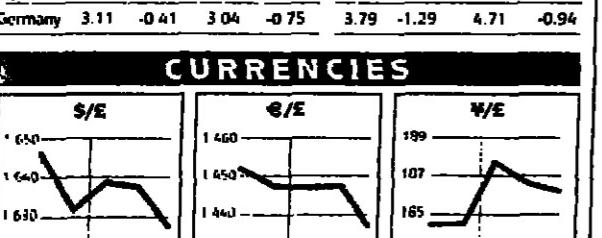
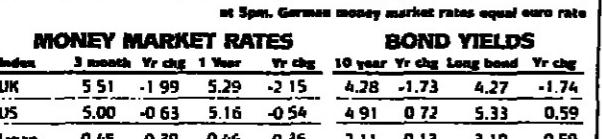
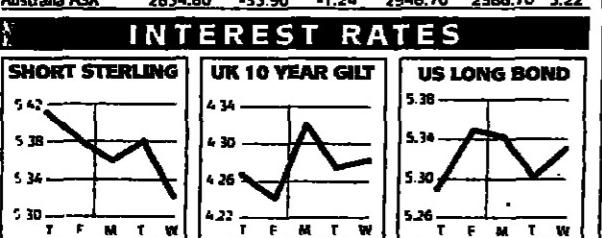
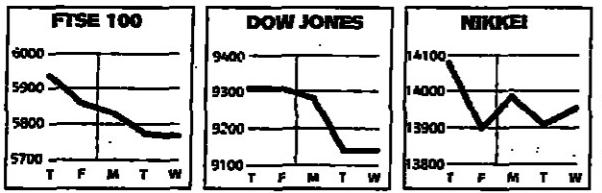
650 jobs to be cut at BP

BP, the petro-chemical giant, yesterday announced 650 job losses, while a further 1,200 jobs came under threat at Kvaerner's Govan shipyard in Scotland. BP said 400 jobs would be "phased out" over the next two years at its Grangemouth complex in Stirlingshire, which employs 2,500, and 250 more would go at its Saltend plant in Hull. Separately, the Scottish Office industry minister Lord Macdonald (pictured) yesterday called for talks with the management at Govan after a crisis meeting with unions. The call came after the yard failed to secure a £36m contract to build a British Antarctic Survey vessel.

Independent appoints Merrill

INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS, the international media group which publishes *The Independent* in the UK, yesterday appointed Merrill Lynch as its corporate brokers worldwide. The group chief executive, Liam Healy, said that, given the global nature of the group's business, the appointment of a leading international investment bank with strong institutional links would help Independent Newspapers take its story to a wider audience. Independent Newspapers has also appointed the Irish brokers Goodbody alongside the group's existing brokers J&E Davy.

STOCK MARKETS



SOURCE: BLOOMBERG

TOURIST RATES							
Australia (\$)							Mexican (nuevo peso)
Austria (schillings)							14.91
Belgium (francs)							3,0895
Canada (\$)							56.68
Cyprus (pounds)							0.8117
Denmark (krone)							10.49
Finland (marks)							8.3658
France (francs)							9.2106
Germany (marks)							2.7559
Greece (drachma)							452.34
Hong Kong (\$)							12.26
Ireland (pounds)							1.1033
India (rupees)							62.25
Israel (shekels)							6.1492
Italy (lira)							2729
Japan (yen)							184.36
Malaysia (ringgit)							5.9460
Malta (lira)							0.6090

SOURCE: BLOOMBERG

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TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)

Austria (schillings)

Belgium (francs)

Canada (\$)

Cyprus (pounds)

Denmark (krone)

Finland (marks)

France (francs)

Germany (marks)

Greece (drachma)

Hong Kong (\$)

Ireland (pounds)

India (rupees)

Israel (shekels)

Italy (lira)

Japan (yen)

Malaysia (ringgit)

Malta (lira)

Mexican (nuevo peso)

Netherlands (guilder)

New Zealand (\$)

Norway (krone)

Portugal (escudos)

Saudi Arabia (rials)

Singapore (\$)

South Africa (rand)

Spain (pesetas)

Sweden (koron)

Switzerland (francs)

Thailand (baht)

Turkey (lira)

USA (\$)

Yuan

Way left clear for TRW to take Lucas Varity

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

LUCAS VARIETY, the car-parts and aerospace group, last night looked set to fall to a £4bn takeover by the US engineer TRW after its rival Federal-Mogul surprised the City and pulled out of the race for the UK company. Federal-Mogul, one of the world's largest car-parts makers, indicated it would not increase its informal £3.6bn cash and

comment further but analysts said that Federal-Mogul did not have the firepower to match TRW's all-cash agreed bid.

They said that the company's overstretched balance sheet had probably deferred the company's Wall Street backers from bankrolling the counterbid. Dick Snell, the group's ambitious chief executive, embarked on an acquisition spree last year

that increased Federal-Mogul's sales from \$1bn to \$7bn. However, the string of purchases, including the £1.5bn takeover of the UK brake-pads group TSN, left the company with a debt mountain which made it difficult to raise additional cash.

One analyst praised Mr Snell's decision: "If you can't make it, better to pull out." He added that an expensive bid

against TRW could have jeopardised Mr Snell's "big, hairy audacious goal" of \$10bn sales by 2002.

The withdrawal of Federal-Mogul clears the way for a TRW takeover of Lucas to create a world leader in the production of brakes, steering systems and defence components, with sales of around \$15bn. The deal would see the disappearance of both

Lucas' London listing and its transfer to the US, three months after a plan by its chief executive Victor Rice to move to the States as an independent company was defeated by shareholders.

Analysts said it was unlikely another counterbidder would emerge and predicted that Lucas shareholders would accept the 288p a share offered by TRW.

Bank may be getting it right after all

MERVYN KING, the Bank of England's Deputy Governor, gave his usual virtuous performance at the quarterly Inflation Report briefing. Any reasonable person looking at the evidence, he argued, should not have been surprised by the Monetary Policy Committee's interest rate decisions. And indeed, Mr King made it seem very logical - with world growth even weaker and inflation credibly subdued, why was anybody caught on the hop by last week's half-point cut?

Asked whether the steep drop in interest rates since October was not evidence that the Bank had earlier made a mistake in raising them too high and leaving them at that level for too long, Mr King pointed to the rum of bad news about growth and good news about inflation since then. Perhaps other people felt they had been more far-sighted, he said, but the MPC had reacted to actual events.

It was a fair enough gibe. It is easy for pundits and pointy heads to have strong views about what the MPC ought to be doing, but many have made far bigger mistakes about what was happening in the economy. Their errors, unlike any the committee might



OUTLOOK

make can be quietly buried in the archives. What Mr King glossed over, however, was the fact that the MPC clearly has changed its mind quite radically about the degree of inflationary pressure in the economy. In particular, the wage inflation it thought was in the pipeline does not exist. The Bank's inflation forecast, for any given interest rate or growth rate, is lower than it was.

Whether or not this counts as a mistake, the financial markets were only too pleased to react to the forecast by pencilling in still lower interest rates. This is because many analysts in the City in their hearts believe the Bank is following a growth target rather than an infla-

tion target - or if not, that it ought to be. They work backwards from the Bank's growth forecast, showing the economy pulling back from the brink of recession in the next few months if interest rates are unchanged, to the conclusion that rates therefore ought to cut.

This would close some of the gap between the Bank's gloomier economic outlook and the relatively optimistic forecast that is the legacy of the Treasury's Pre-Budget Report. If rates fall to 5 per cent or lower, growth will be a bit better; though perhaps not as high as Gordon Brown hoped in November. The Chancellor, like the City, is depending on the MPC to cut interest rates again.

Yesterday's Inflation Report, stressing the downside risks to growth and inflation, certainly encouraged its readers to hope so. And, as Mr King said, the Bank has shown it will do what is needed to keep inflation from falling too low as well as climbing too high.

Whether interest rates drop to 5 per cent, or 4.5 per cent, or stay unchanged, it is important to keep the broader economic picture in mind. Inflation is low and is expected to stay low, while the economic downturn is

sure to be the mildest since the 1960s. No doubt it could have been even better, but whatever the MPC's tactical mistakes, it is hard to fault the strategic results.

Pension victory?

THE "VICTORY" that the National Grid Two won in the Court of Appeal yesterday may prove a pyrrhic one, not just for pensioners of the electricity industry but for employees right across the land. Dave Laws and Reg Mayes have fought an heroic battle against the Grid for the last six years in an attempt to prove that it misused the surplus in its pension fund when it spent £46m of the money to finance redundancy payments at the time of privatisation.

Since this was a test case, up to 300,000 pensioners of the electricity industry who are members of the same fund and suffered similar losses stood to benefit to the tune of £1.5m.

There is a point of principle here. The Grid has argued consistently that since employers are required to make up the deficit in final salary pension schemes, they should also be entitled to any surplus that arises.

This, however, ignores the principle that pensions are a form of deferred pay, not a pot of gold to be raided by employers. The Grid also argued that its treatment of the pension surplus was equitable since it shared out the surplus between the company and the members in the same ratio as each had contributed - two to one. This ignores the fact that the bulk of the surplus was accumulated while the electricity industry was in public ownership.

While the legal battle has raged and the lawyers' meter has been running, some of those pensioners who might otherwise have been enjoying enhanced benefits have died. By the time the Grid has appealed to the House of Lords against the Court of Appeal ruling, another two years will have expired, along with yet more pensioners.

In simple headline terms, the three judges yesterday upheld the appeal of Mr Laws and Mr Mayes against an earlier High Court ruling that the Grid had been within its rights. But the idea that the ruling will open the floodgates is almost certainly fanciful. For the Appeal Court also ruled that surpluses in pension funds do not belong to their members and that it would be "grotesque" for

the Grid to now make additional payments into a fund that continues to be in substantial surplus.

Moreover, the Appeal Court accepted the argument that employers are entitled to take account of their own interests when deciding what to do with pension surpluses. In effect, the Grid was found guilty of a technical breach of pension fund rules by having failed to make the appropriate amendment to its scheme before it took its share of the surplus.

The Grid has now been advised that the maximum it will have to pay into the fund is £10m. National Power, which took 225m from the surplus and fought a parallel case against its pensioners, reckons it may not have to make any payments into the fund at all.

Even if higher payments do have to be made, that may not mean increased benefits for members. The employers may simply use those payments as credits against future contributions.

So a great battle over principle may in the end yield very little for the pensioners in practice. And yet the publicity generated by this cause celebre may persuade more and more companies to abandon final salary schemes, which are expensive

to fund, and move to money purchase schemes, which are cheaper, and less attractive to employees. In that case Mr Laws and Mr Mayes will have won a victory but at the expense of millions more losers.

Vaux scandal

NO APOLOGY is offered for returning for the second successive day to extraordinary goings on at Vaux Group, the Sunderland based brewer. From a City perspective, the whole thing stinks.

Sir Paul Nicolson, chairman of Vaux, is an honourable man, and he no doubt believes he is doing the right thing by his company, his employees and the local Sunderland community. He no doubt also believes all correct corporate governance procedures have been followed in preparing to sell the group's two breweries and some of its pubs to his brother. But when the non executives who decide these things are led by the chairman's brother in law, Stephen Gibbs, and the independence of much of the rest of the board is of questionable status, you have to wonder how much the letter of corporate governance law really matters.

£11bn electricity merger talks called off

TAKOVER FEVER returned to the electricity sector yesterday after National Power and United Utilities, the owner of Norweb and North West Water, disclosed that they had called off talks on an £11bn merger at the eleventh hour.

The talks, which centred on an all-share, no-premium merger, were terminated on Monday night after the two companies agreed a deal would not be in shareholders' interests.

There was speculation last night that the two companies would now turn their sights on other merger partners. But rumours also swirled that National Power may be contemplating a hostile bid for United Utilities.

BY MICHAEL HARRISON
Business Editor

felt that a no-premium merger would have short-changed its shareholders.

United Utilities said that, as part of a broad review of strategy, it had held discussions with National Power about the potential benefits of a merger. These had reached a "detailed stage" before Monday night's termination of talks.

By contrast, National Power's statement referred merely to "conversations" that had been held held with United about a possible merger.

City observers said the tone of the two statements suggested that United was the keenest of the two to flush out a bidder, even though the initial approach came from National Power.

The rival generator, PowerGen, has already merged with East Midlands Electricity and has made no secret of its interest in buying a second regional electricity company if permitted.

National Power meanwhile has taken over the supply arm of Midland Electricity.

Both generators are in the process of selling off coal-fired power stations in return for being allowed to expand into electricity distribution and supply. National Power expects to raise £2bn from the sale of its Drax station in Yorkshire while PowerGen expects to net £1.5bn from the sale of its Ferrybridge and Fiddler's Ferry stations.

Outlook, this page



Keith Henry: Thought to have made first approach

MEPs reject plea to exempt eurobonds from new tax

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

on all savings, is Luxembourg

After the vote Alan Donnelly, leader of the Labour MEPs, re

lashed a letter to the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, arguing that the draft directive is "flawed and against the interests of employment in Europe's financial services industry".

A Labour move for the ex-

emption was beaten by a large

majority in Strasbourg yesterday,

as British politicians repeated

warnings that the tax could cost

up to 110,000 City jobs.

Although the vote in the European Parliament was only

consultative, it underlined the UK's isolation on the issue. The

only other EU country holding

out against the withholding tax,

expected to be set at 20 per cent

Swiss preparations for any new opportunities arising from the withholding tax.

Bryan Cassidy, Conservative economics spokesman at Strasbourg, said the proposals "could lead to thousands of job losses in the City if the eurobond market is forced to close due to misguided Euro-rules".

A motion approving the European Commission's proposals went through by 386 votes to 106, despite the opposition of most Labour MEPs.

Germany has already highlighted the importance it attaches to the measure, which, it argues, will help eliminate unfair tax competition.

Great Value Short Breaks

The Independent and Thomson Breakaway have joined forces to offer great value trips around Europe. Today the offer is for Self-Drive holidays to Belgium from only £59 or, if you prefer to relax and let the train take the strain, you can travel by Eurostar from only £96.

Choose your hotel

The Thomson Breakaway Self-Drive offer is available at a selection of 12 city centre hotels in Brussels and Bruges ranging from 2T to more luxurious 5T Select accommodation. Thomson Breakaway Cities feature over 25 city centre hotels from simple 1T to deluxe 5T Select hotels in Brussels and Bruges. Unique Thomson T-ratings enable you to compare hotels in different countries and cities, providing an at-a-glance guide to location, service, facilities, food and comfort. All accommodation has been carefully selected and graded according to detailed assessment by Thomson as well as from analysis of customer satisfaction questionnaires.

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Simply call the Thomson Breakaway holiday hotline on 0181 210 4515 immediately, quoting reference C106X to make your reservation. The reservation lines will be open from 8am-9pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5pm at weekends. Then send in four tokens from the nine that will appear in *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday* between the 6th and 14th of February (inclusive). To validate your offer, please

send the tokens with the completed application form below to *The Independent European Break Offer*, PO Box 21063, London, N1 2WY. If you would like a brochure, call the brochure hotline on 01509 268 268 quoting reference CBIN06.

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The price of your holiday is based on return Eurotunnel travel between Folkestone and Calais with 1 night accommodation, Continental breakfast, taxes and a complimentary guidebook. Travel is based on four adults sharing a car. Accommodation is based on two adults sharing a room. Eurostar travel is also available. Transfers between the train station and hotel are not included.

Additional information

Single rooms are subject to a supplement and may be limited in availability. Extra nights can be booked from only £20 per person per night. Midweek supplements may apply to some hotels in Brussels. Accommodation only: If you prefer to make your own independent travel arrangements, why not book your accommodation through Thomson Breakaway? Prices start from £20 per person per night.

SELF-DRIVE AND EUROSTAR OFFERS

Brussels	4 in car	Eurostar supp.	Save up to (per person)
2T	£59	£37	£64
3T	£72	£37	£55
4T	£82	£37	£72
5T	£99	£37	£91

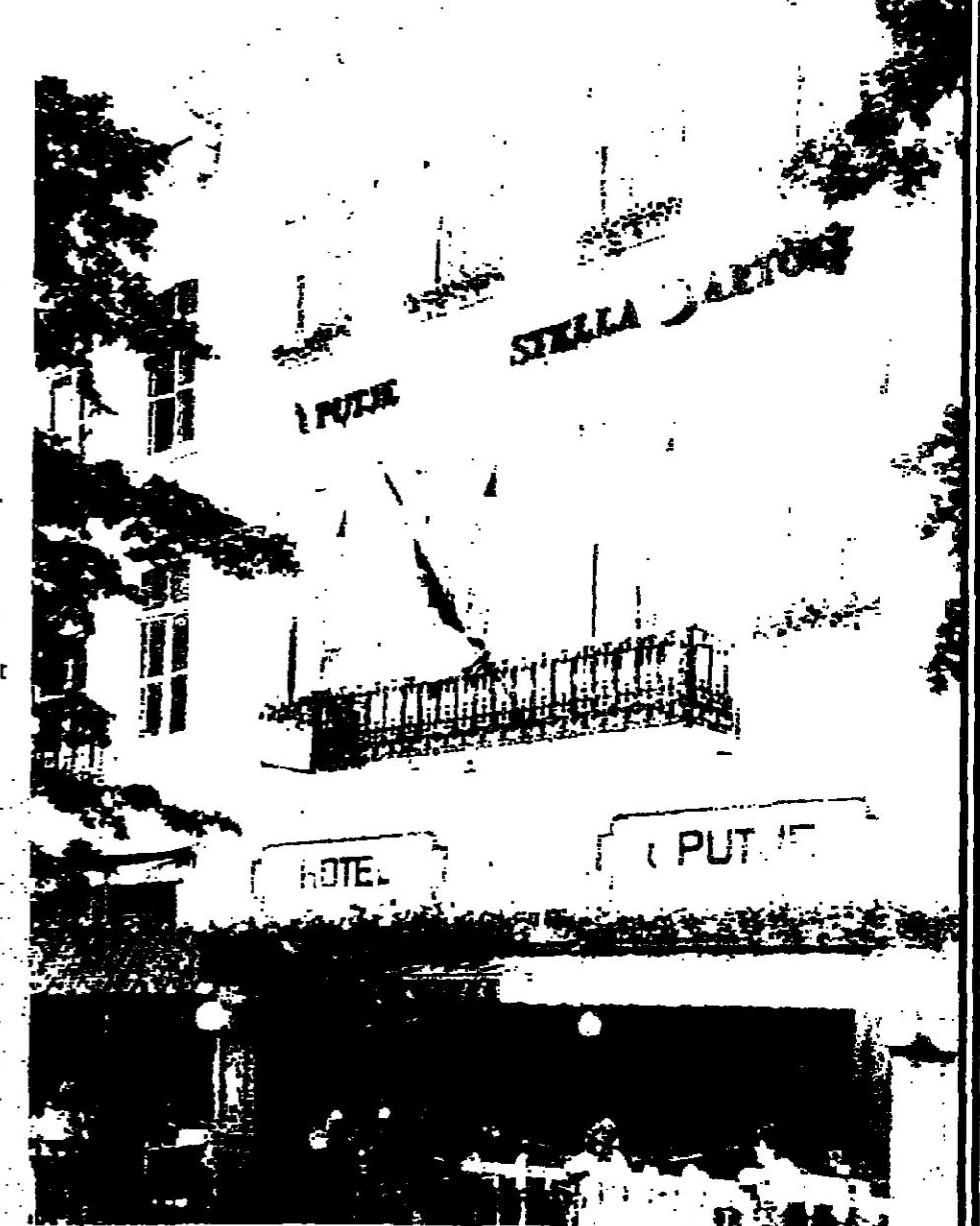
Supplements for two passengers travelling: £7 per person (Eurostar).

Bruges	4 in car	Eurostar supp.	Save up to (per person)
2T	£59	£37	£51
3T	£82	£37	£42
4T	£99	£37	£55

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For detailed information on any of the featured hotels, please see the 1999 Thomson Breakaway Cities brochure. See above.

Brussels	Bruges
2T	Delta
3T	TP Suite
4T	Leopold
5T	Navarra
2T	Arenbourg
3T	Bedford
4T	Crowne Plaza
5T	Mendien



APPLICATION FORM (INCLUDE 4 TOKENS)

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Terms and conditions: Prices are per person and are subject to availability. Applicants must be over 18. All offers must be booked by 28/2/99 for travel up to and including 22/3/99. All holidays are subject to the Fair Trading Charter as detailed in The 1999 Thomson Breakaway Cities brochure. No photocopied tokens. Promoter: Thomson Breakaway.

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20/MANAGED FUNDS

Fund	Set	Buy	+/-	Yld	Val	Ind.	Chg %	Fund	Set	Buy	+/-	Yld	Val	Ind.	Chg %	Fund	Set	Buy	+/-	Yld	Val	Ind.	Chg %
AIM AIMED Portfolio Ltd	100	100	-100	1.00	5.00			AIM AIMED Portfolio Ltd	100	100	-100	1.00	5.00			AIM AIMED Portfolio Ltd	100	100	-100	1.00	5.00		
Globe Income	225.26	241.89	-1.65	3.20	5.00			Globe Income	85.05	86.75	-1.48	8.10	6.00			Globe Income	85.78	86.41	-0.62	1.20	5.00		
Entity Income	151.99	162.61	-4.62	4.74	5.00			Entity Income	83.20	84.00	-1.80	5.25	5.00			Entity Income	87.00	87.30	-0.41	0.00	5.00		
Global Income	56.90	58.00	-0.10	3.20	5.00			Global Income	184.47	184.15	-1.61	9.00	6.00			Global Income	157.20	157.40	-1.20	5.00	5.00		
Global Income	59.27	59.50	-0.23	3.50	6.00			Global Income	184.47	184.15	-1.61	9.00	6.00			Global Income	157.20	157.40	-1.20	5.00	5.00		
AIM Growth Fund Ltd	4	4	-100	100	1.00			AIM Growth Fund Ltd	200.79	209.18	-3.05	0.52	4.00			AIM Growth Fund Ltd	204.35	202.92	-2.40	0.00	4.00		
4 Star 978 Fund Ltd	100	100	-100	1.00	3.00			AIM Growth Fund Ltd	180.00	192.00	-0.90	5.00	5.00			AIM Growth Fund Ltd	180.00	192.00	-0.90	5.00	5.00		
American Fund	115.91	116.46	-0.55	3.00	5.00			American Fund	44.72	44.84	-0.02	1.10	5.00			American Fund	152.67	152.81	-0.12	1.00	5.00		
American Fund	127.87	128.46	-0.59	3.14	5.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.20	-0.20	1.00	5.00		
AIM Balanced Fund	181.91	181.89	-0.02	1.90	3.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.20	-0.20	1.00	5.00		
AIM Balanced Fund	181.91	181.89	-0.02	1.90	3.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.20	-0.20	1.00	5.00		
AIM Bond Fund	55.65	55.10	0.15	3.20	5.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.20	-0.20	1.00	5.00		
AIM Bond Fund	55.65	55.10	0.15	3.20	5.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.20	-0.20	1.00	5.00		
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AIM Bond Fund	55.65	55.10	0.15	3.20	5.00			American Fund	120.00	120.00	-0.00	5.00	5.00			American Fund	157.00	157.					

Asian decoys to trap racists

THE INDEPENDENT
Thursday 11 February 1999

BUSINESS/21

A bit of a slowdown, then back to normal? It won't be that easy

THE LATEST Inflation Report from the Bank of England raises the question whether we need a separate report about inflation, or whether it should be reincorporated into the Bank's main Quarterly Bulletin. Instead, maybe there should be a new Recessions Report.

More about the recession threat in a moment. First, have a look at the top graph, showing producer price inflation through the 1990s in the UK, the G7 minus the UK, and the euro area. Back in the early 1990s Britain had a significant inflation problem. In absolute terms inflation was not at all high by comparison with the levels of the 1970s or early 1980s, but it was high by comparison with the other large developed countries. Since then, and most dramatically in the last year, inflation has plunged. But it has not only plunged. It has harmonised. The price at which companies can sell their goods is sharply negative everywhere.

Inflation on the conventional measure of the retail price index does continue in the UK: the middle part of the Bank projections put it spot on 2.5 per cent. But that is partly the result of the way we calculate our RPI. If we were to use the standard method of calculation of the EU it would be half that, and even that method does not allow for quality increases, or the fact that people change their habits, shopping around for discounted deals.

Where there is inflation is in asset prices: house prices still seem to be climbing, particularly in London and the South-east, and share and (particularly) bond prices are higher than they were a year ago. Asset price inflation does not enter into the normal considerations of central bankers: they worry about it, to be sure, but it is not in their official target ranges.

THIS LEADS TO A really big question which will, I suggest, preoccupy people in the next decade. Why is there asset price inflation in a world where there is no inflation, or virtually none, in goods and services?

Monetarists would say that it is because too much money is being printed. You do not need to believe that there is a direct mechanistic relationship between the supply of money and the supply of goods and services to accept that there ought to be some sort of relationship between the two. Through the 1980s, real money supply (the broad M4 measure) was consistently higher than the growth of GDP as the lower graph shows. So except in the early 1980s and early 1990s squeezes, monetary policy accommodated some rise in prices.

But now there is little or no rise in prices and money supply is still growing faster than the economy as a whole. Talk to anyone involved in financial markets and the word that keeps cropping up is "liquidity" - there is a lot of money chasing a limited supply of securities. So share prices have stayed high and bond prices have soared away.

You could even say that,



HAMISH MCRAE

It is possible that we will go back to trend growth after the millennium ... but the risks remain on the downside

while there was current inflation, rising prices of goods and services were available to absorb excess monetary growth. Now the money is not mopped up in that way and goes into holding up share prices. This is by no means only a British phenomenon. In fact the excess liquidity argument is even stronger in the US. Share prices are at a 40-year high relative to company earnings.

But this is not sustainable. Asset prices cannot go up relative to current prices for ever; anymore house prices can rise faster than earnings. At some stage a new equilibrium has to be reached: either a plateau - or maybe a slump.

This brings us to the new Bank forecasts for the UK

The main bit that does not is the employment figures, which have been strong, but this may be the result of lags.) Talking to business people with activities right across the country, I catch the impression that there is still very solid demand. Provided the price is right, people will still buy. Volumes, in general, are fine. The problem is getting the price to a level where people feel they are getting good value. As the year moves on, demand will be further stoked by the millennium: the negative aspects of the millennium bug, which costs money to fix, and the more positive "party-time" spending expected in the second half.

AND THEN WHAT? Back to trend growth? Well, it is certainly

possible. It may transpire that the majority is right after all, and it is a plausible notion that the pause in UK growth this year will have allowed some modest rebalancing of the economy so that it can resume trend growth after a long period of out-performance. But is not a period of below-trend growth really just a four weeks away?

It is very hard to disagree when there is such a high degree of consensus about something, particularly since most of the factual evidence seems to support the conventional view.

Because of the separate publication of the Inflation Report we no longer pay much attention to the parent publication, the Bank's Quarterly Bulletin. This is a pity because

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MAIN MOVERS											
RISES						FALLS					
PRICES/P. CHG/P. %CHG						PRICES/P. CHG/P. %CHG					
Alpha Airtel 88.86 0.50 0.57						Polaris 62.35 -1.00 -1.51					
Bectel (WMS) 59.00 0.00 0.00						Pig Iron 62.00 -2.00 -3.07					
Monogram 61.00 0.00 0.00						Alcan 157.50 -1.00 -0.59					
Westar 381.20 0.00 0.00						JSA Holdings 125.00 -1.00 -0.33					
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Supermarket merger talk lifts a dull day

THE STOCK market never lets go of a good takeover rumour – particularly one that looks eminently feasible. For the umpteenth time the story of an Asda takeover of supermarket rival Safeway was given a whirl and, in heavy trading, Asda shares added 2.75p to 154.75p and Safeway 8.5p to 298.5p.

There were, it was alleged, some shrewd buyers chasing the shares. Whether they decided to alight on the supermarket twosome on a particularly dull, uneven trading session may, of course, have been pure coincidence.

Asda and Safeway have talked merger. Eighteen months ago the two abandoned discussions when it became apparent that Westminster would not be too happy about any deal.

But, argued yesterday's buyers, times change and with the new wealth creation attitude at the Department of Trade and Industry, the su-

WILLIAM BAIRD, the textile group, may be in play. The shares rose 10p to 96p after a 7p gain on Tuesday.

Some buyers have been attracted by the 13 per cent dividend yield. But there are also suggestions of corporate action with, perhaps, a venture capitalist looking at the strength of the group and pondering a break up bid. Baird has said it expects last year's profits before exceptional to be around £30m.

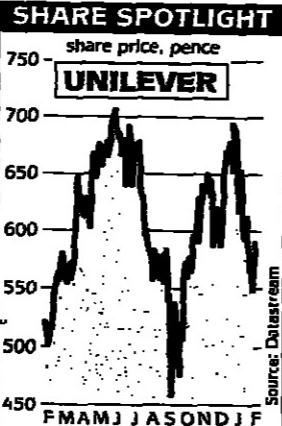
marketeers had been tempted to resume talks.

Since the earlier negotiations ended, there have been a number of flurries as stories have circulated of new talks. The shares of the two chains are well below their peaks. Asda hit 218.75p last year; Safeway topped 400p two years ago.

Footsie spent the day fretting about New York and re-

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN



duced an 82 point deficit to 9.7 at 5,770.2 when US shares displayed rather more resilience than expected. It was the sixth fall on the trot. Uncertainties weakened although takeovers, real and rumoured, continued to cast their spell.

Any share which had been surging higher on the back of some vagueness, Internet associations come under pressure. Dixons fell 4.5p to 982.5p and Reuters 39.5p to 793.5p.

EMI, with the added discomfort of any lack of takeover action, lost 30.75p to 421.75p. Psiion, with a profits warning to boot, retreated 115p to 832.5p.

But BSkyB, on its better-than-expected digital TV expansion, gained 60.5p to 474.75p despite a sharp profits fall. Its digital success ruffled Carlton Communications, one of the two rival Ondigital providers, down 38p to 596p. Granada, the

other Ondigital adventurer, lost 8.5p to 1,126.5p.

Unilever, in retreat for most of this year, rallied 36.5p to 582.5p as the market indulged in another of its favourite games, arbitraging between the British and Dutch ends of the food and soap behemoth.

National Power rose 11.5p to 611.5p and United Utilities 5p to 812p. The two admitted having held merger talks.

GRE, the insurance group, fell a further 2.75p to 344p as bidder Sun Life & Provincial gave up another 5p to 460p. The bid was worth around 39p when it was agreed.

Banks were firmer with Lloyds TSB figures tomorrow, up 7p to 753p. Allied Irish Bank, said to be a Lloyds target, was given another whirl but, after an early 37.5p gain, settled for a 6p loss at 1,11p.

Booker, the cash-and-carry chain, was another bid candidate to run out of steam. At one time up 7p, the shares ended 1.5p higher at 67.5p.

But excitement intensified at Field, the packaging group.

The shares firms 12.5p to 356p after a bidding war between two US groups erupted. Shireswood launched an agreed 350p a share offer topping a 320p bid from Chesapeake which let it be known that it may well return to the fray.

Cleveland, a property group, held at 101p after rejecting a "wholly inadequate" offer, and loss adjuster Pyrcraft & Arnold firmed at 65.5p after a cash and shares offer from Fishers International, a financial services group.

Eclipse Blinds, up 30p at 87.5p, said it was talking and Pubs 'n' Bars held at 55p after confirming it was talking to the Real Leisure pub chain. Laobheart, a household goods group, succumbed to profit taking, falling 4.5p to 5.5p, after saying it was in talks with a potential bidder.

Vaux, the brewing and hotels group rocked by a boardroom brawl, frothed 25p higher to 301.5p on the belief that the row has left the group open to a takeover strike.

Monument Oil & Gas flared 4.5p to 41.5p with corporate activity in the oil industry prompting suggestions that it could soon be a target.

Reunion Mining, which has admitted bid talks, rose a further 12.5p to 88p, and GB Railways, which denied bid action, steamed ahead, adding 13.5p to 178.5p.

Racial Electronic fell 10.5p to 378p ahead of a Henderson Croftwaste investment dinner at London's Howard Hotel. Henderson was also at the nearby Savoy Hotel where Ramco Energy, unchanged at 23p, was the subject of an investment dinner.

British American Tobacco fell a further 2.75p to 344p as reports that rival Philip Morris had been successfully sued by a smoker who contracted cancer.

Johnson Matthey, the metals group, eased 12.5p to 440p as analysts left to examine its American operations.

MATALLAN, the discount clothing chain, has defied the retail gloom. The shares rose 13p to 455p, highest since last spring's flotation. They seem destined to move into the FTSE 250 index after next month's quarterly review.

There is already evidence of tracker funds preparing for the group's elevation. Engineer Rotork arrived in the mid cap index yesterday, ending 3p higher at 389p, a peak. It replaced advertising group Abbott Mead Vickers.

Phytopharm, developing drugs from plants, sprouted 26p to 201.5p following coverage of the potential lurking in South Africa's vegetation.

Keystone Software fell 4.5p to 12p. It is aiming to raise £1.5m through a placing and open offer at 10p a share.

SEAG VOLUME: 958.2M
SEAG TRADES: 70,661
GILTS INDEX: 115.74 +0.18

assumption is rising strongly and beer itself costs 20p a pint, but SAB has 88 per cent of the local market and could itself be vulnerable to a determined push from outside competition.

Soft drinks accounted for 14 per cent of profits last year, more than half of that from the joint venture with Coca-Cola which comes up for renewal in 2007. Hotels and gaming gen-

INVESTMENT

South African brewer seeks £200m in London

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

SOUTH AFRICAN BREWERIES: AT A GLANCE

Market value £4bn, share price 10.2p

Five year record (Adjusted for inflation)

Turnover (Rand bn) ... 25 27 29 31 32.5

Return on equity (%) ... 19.0 17.7 16.9 14.0 17.5

Earnings per share (Rand) ... 5.00 5.35 6.05 6.40 6.55

Dividends per share (SA cents) 155 200 250 287 330

Sales operating profit Year ending 31 March 1998

South African Breweries International 55.7% ... 17.0 16.0 15.0 14.0 13.0

PGS (Industrial) 22.5% ... 13.0 12.0 11.0 10.0 9.0

Hotels & Gaming 4.7% ... 12.0 11.0 10.0 9.0 8.0

Other beverages 13.6% ... 11.0 10.0 9.0 8.0 7.0

Source: Datastream

almost wholly from emerging markets in Africa and Poland, where most of the new money will be invested. There are no plans to enter the UK market.

Existing shares are being split on a two-for-one basis, up to £1.50m worth of new shares are being placed with institutions, mainly in the UK, with a further £25m in reserve, and two South African companies, JIC and Anglo-American, are selling 38 million shares between them in the hope of raising around £200m.

Another South African holding company, Bevcon, has agreed not to sell any of its 25.5 per cent stake in SAB but this lock-in expires on 8 January next year.

The share price in South Africa is £10.20 at the current time. It values the entire company at around £4bn after the placing and after the split sets a target share price of around 50p and a possible 12 times future earnings.

But this is not necessarily a guide to a fair price in London. Less dynamic but safer rivals include Bass, on 16 times earnings, Heineken on 12 times and Carlsberg on 34 times. Something less than 50p would make the shares more attractive when dealings begin on 2 March.

Consumption is rising strongly and beer itself costs 20p a pint, but SAB has 88 per cent of the local market and could itself be vulnerable to a determined push from outside competition.

Soft drinks accounted for 14 per cent of profits last year, more than half of that from the joint venture with Coca-Cola which comes up for renewal in 2007. Hotels and gaming gen-

erated 5 per cent. SAB's retail and most of its industrial interests have been sold off over the last two years and the remaining industrial holding company, PGSI, accounted for 27 per cent of turnover but only 3 per cent of profits. It is up for sale as soon as the price is right.

Brewing outside South Africa generated another 23 per cent of profits last year but

MEDEVA faces another tough year

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

MEDEVA, Britain's fourth largest drug company, yesterday warned its long-suffering shareholders to prepare for another year of hardship as it revealed a slump in interim profits.

The company said that a collapse in sales of Methylphenidate, its best selling treatment for hyperactive children, contributed to a 47 per cent plunge in pre-tax profits to £59.3m in the first half of the financial year. Revenues from the drug have been savaged by the entry of a new competitor, Schein Pharmaceuticals, in the tightly regulated US market.

The near 40 per cent fall in Methylphenidate's revenue

vaccine for hepatitis B to be launched in the middle of 2000. Sales could reach some £200m a year, not a spectacular level but enough to fuel Medeva's profits for some time.

However, Hepagene could become a real moneymaker if Medeva can get it approved as a treatment of hepatitis as well as a vaccine. A positive result from clinical trials could push Hepagene's earnings potential to some £50m overnight.

Industry analysts are not so sure. Medeva's biggest hope to counter Methylphenidate's terminal decline is Hepagene, a

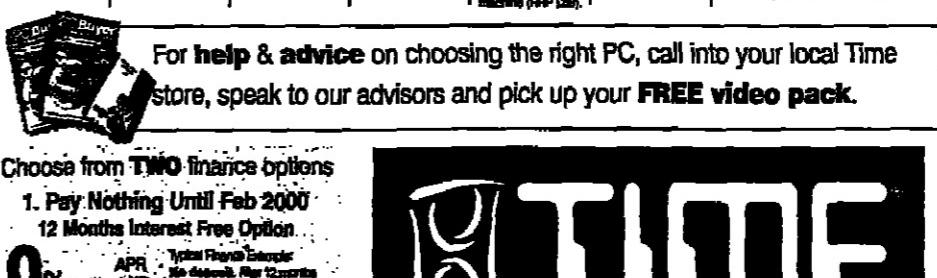
its strategy of picking up fledgling drugs from biotechnology companies and old treatments from big pharmaceuticals groups while spending little on its own research will yield benefits in the long run.

One City analyst disagreed: "This strategy is unproven. This company needs a big product to drive growth."

After the recent slide, the shares are on just nine times 1999 earnings, expected to be around 254p. But unless a predator comes in with a takeover, it's difficult to see how they will go up before 2000. As one analyst put it: "This is a growth stock without growth."

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With nothing to pay until Feb 2000



Choose from TWO finance options

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12 Month Interest Free Option

0% APR

2. Time Low APR Purchase Plan

26.8% APR

4 yrs

4.7% APR

4 yrs

4.0% APR

4 yrs

3.8% APR

4 yrs

3.6% APR

4 yrs

3.4% APR

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4 yrs

0.8% APR

SPORT

FA Cup fifth round: Fulham's trip to Old Trafford brings back painful memories for their most famous follower

The day United silenced Jimmy Hill

BY PHIL SHAW

IN THE best known of his myriad football incarnations, Jimmy Hill has talked the nation through thousands of goals. But the one he is describing is different. For one thing, it gave Fulham a foothold in the FA Cup final at the expense of Manchester United. For another, he scored it himself.

It is semi-final day at Villa Park, barely seven weeks after the Munich air disaster of 1958, and Fulham stand between Manchester United and an emotional return to Wembley. Before a crowd of nearly 70,000 people the Second Division side have cancelled out an early goal by the young Bobby Charlton and are about to get their noses, or rather chins, in front.

As Des Lynam might have said, how did you see it? Jim? "Our keeper, Tony Maceo, threw the ball to Roy Dwight, Elton John's cousin. I saw an opening between the centre-backs and went on a through run. Roy hit a spectacular pass in front of me. It was just a question of getting there first and putting it past Harry Gregg, which I did."

There is no Alan Hansen present to tease Hill about how much the goal owed to "diabolical defending", no Trevor Brooking to puncture his assertion that "I thought I'd scored the winning goal". But while Charlton quickly equalised, only the harshest pundit could have denied Fulham's right to a replay after an injury to Jim Langley effectively left United facing 10 men for the entire second half.

When the sides reconvened at Highbury, Fulham trailed 3-0 but battled back and were only 4-3 down when Johnny Haynes had a "goal" disallowed with five minutes left. "We saw later on *Pathe News* that it should have stood but, in pushing for the equaliser, we let in a fifth," recalls Hill. "I was terribly disappointed because, as it turned out, it was my one chance to play in a Wembley final."

As underdogs, Hill and his colleagues would have been popular winners in normal circumstances, but in the aftermath of Munich he remembers "the country was rooting for United". However, the roles will be well and truly reversed on Sunday when United and Fulham play it again as Premiership and Second Division leaders respectively in the fifth round at a packed Old Trafford.

I can still picture old man Dean coming into the dressing-room wearing a starched winged collar. Tommy Trinder didn't put any money in but he kept the club in the news and gave very generously of himself. He used to tell us gags on the coach, which was great for morale.

"The players were an interesting mix. We had grammar-school boys like myself and Haynes and others who were graduates of the university of life. But we shared a sense of fun. I also remember Bill Dotchin rejoining Fulham from Arsenal and saying: 'What a pleasure it is to be back, and to have some intelligent conversation in the changing-room'."

He ended "the happiest days of my footballing life" in 1961 and, having led the union, crossed into management with Coventry. Launching the "Sky Blue revolution" (to which he would return as chairman), he won them a place among the élite which they hold to this day. He then went into television, where he has worked as an executive, presenter and analyst respectively with terrestrial and satellite channels alike.

There have also been ventures into US soccer (unprofitably) and Saudi Arabian football (successfully), while he recently added a fresh string to his crowded bow with an absorbing autobiography rich in anecdotes. But it was when he was a director of Charlton, where he had answered a friend's plea to bring some football experience to a board full of businessmen, that he came to Fulham's rescue.

"I went to the public meeting in Hammersmith Town Hall. The club looked as if it was going to die. People were asking 'Will you do this?' and I couldn't resist. All my life I've responded to challenges and, because of the wonderfully nostalgic years and the great friendships I formed there, I still felt part of Fulham."

For 10 years, even when he was due back in London for *Match of the Day*, Chairman Hill spent Saturdays watching Fulham in unglamorous settings. Some who shared his devotion argue that something has been lost since the Al Fayed takeover - Keegan was astonished when a fan told him: "We don't want million-pound players here" - but Hill is pleased simply to see his first love "moving forward".

Whether they will ever fulfil their owner's ambition to be "the Manchester United of the South" is another matter. Hill believes their crowd-pulling potential places them in the Southampton/Nottingham Forest bracket. "And if they do reach the Premiership, they can't carry on at Craven Cottage," he warns. "Not only because of the size of the ground, but also because the area, particularly the roads, won't take it."

That is for the future. The present is all about Fulham performing creditably on Sunday and, more importantly in Hill's eyes, promotion back to the game's second tier: "I'll be there in spirit," promises the man Alex Ferguson labelled "a prat" for having the temerity to condemn a cynical lunge by Eric Cantona. "Let's just say it would not displease me at all if they got revenge for our defeat by United."

*The Dean family, who made blinds in Putney, owned the club, and

I went to the public meeting. The club looked as if it would die. People were asking: Will you do this? I could not resist'

Doncaster a week before the United game - Hill was part of the team who restored their status and cemented the image of Fulham as a club bristling with charisma and characters.

There was something about the place itself: the quaintness of the Cottage, nestling in a corner of the ground bordered by a picturesquely park; the open terrace parallel to the Thames where the flags of all their rivals fluttered; the absence of floodlights until the early 1960s.

It was matched by a plethora of personalities ranging from the chairman, comedian Tommy Trinder, to players such as Haynes, Bobby Robson, "Josh" Chamberlain and Hill, who already stood out for his "beatnik" beard and work as chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association.

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Florimo signals change of style

Henry Paul has been replaced at Wigan by a No 6 more in tune with his rugby league team-mates.

By Dave Hadfield

IT IS refreshing evidence of the continuing diversity of rugby league that Wigan's No 6 shirt this season will be worn by a player so different in style from his predecessor.

Greg Florimo, who makes his competitive debut for his new club in the most demanding of circumstances in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup tie at Leeds on Sunday, brings a wide range of qualities to the crucial role of stand-off. But he is not and never will be a Henry Paul, any more than Henry Paul is a Greg Florimo.

"Henry and I play very different styles," Florimo said. "Although I might lack some of his ability to ad lib, I'd like to think I bring some other strengths."

"I'm pretty direct. I like to take defences on and, apart from my running game, I think I can be a pretty good link man for the players outside me."

Or, as his new coach, John Monie, puts it: "We might lose a bit of the unpredictability that we had with Henry. The players around him will know more of what to expect from Greg."

At St. Florimo is something closer to the ultimate, hard-boiled Australian professional. That is why, when it came right down to making decisions on this year's budget, Monie preferred to have him on board, rather than the unorthodox Paul, who has signed instead for the Bradford Bulls.

The Wigan captain, Andy Farrell, has noticed the difference as well. In the couple of weeks since Florimo arrived, they have worked together on game plans and team structures, the sort of stuff that the mercurial New Zealander did not overly concern himself with that much.

The jury will be out for some time on whether the change will make Wigan a harder team to play against. But, starting with Sunday's showdown at Head-



Greg Florimo arrives at Central Park after 12 years of Australian league - "I'm expecting to learn as much from the [Wigan] players as they learn from me" Ben Duffy

ingley, he will certainly be different. It will be different for Florimo as well. After 12 years with North Sydney, he is starting a new career with only his second professional club.

"It felt a bit odd to be putting on a different shirt," he said after his first outing with Wigan, in the friendly at Halifax last week. "But it appeals to me fantastically to be going from that into a game like the one against Leeds."

The Challenge Cup is probably still the premier competition here, so I couldn't have a better start. It's obviously a dif-

ferent tie, but if we can win it we'll really think that we can go all the way to Wembley."

The prospects of them doing that, despite the challenge of a side that came so close to matching them last season, depend to a large extent on Florimo and another Norths player he has been partly responsible for bringing from the club.

Reber's arrival will also ease Florimo's transition, although playing in England has been on his agenda since touring here and winning two of his four Test caps in 1994.

Like many Australians, the noise and atmosphere created by British crowds made an immediate impression on him, so going into a game like Sun-

day's is a rapid introduction to what he came here for.

And there is also a powerful Norths connection at work, with the Leeds coach, Graham Murray, due to take over at Florimo's old club next season.

"When you look at what he's done at Leeds, where he's lifted them from what had been a few flat years, then he's obviously got the credentials."

The quality of those players around him has already impressed Florimo. "I can't get over Jason Robinson. His athleticism and power and ability to take defences apart are something really special."

North Sydney, however, is under serious scrutiny for the first time this weekend.

He warns the supporters not to expect too much, too soon. "Although I've played a lot of first grade in Sydney, I'm not coming here with the attitude that I know everything. Even at the tender age of 31, I'm expecting to learn as much from the players here as they learn from me."

"Playing with players like that makes it a lot easier for me to settle in."

Monie, for one, has always predicted that those players would greatly enjoy playing with Greg Florimo.

His ability to add an extra dimension to the side will rarely be tested more acutely than this Sunday against Leeds, but Florimo is ready to show what he can contribute.

Hanley calls on young centres

By DAVE HADFIELD

THE ST HELENS coach, Ellery Hanley, deprived of perhaps the most powerful centre pairing in the game, will put his faith in two virtually untried young players in his first competitive match in charge on Sunday.

Saints will not only be without their new signing, Kevin Iro, with an ankle injury but are also almost certain to have to manage without Paul Newlove, who has strained a hamstring in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup tie at Hunslet.

That means a full debut for 18-year-old Paul Wellens, alongside Anthony Stewart, just a year older and with only a handful of first-team games on the wing behind him.

Hanley, however, has complete confidence in the youngster players, both of them Great Britain Academy internationals, he has had to call up.

"Wellens has so much ability that he can play in just about any position in the backs," he said. "He is so confident and his attitude is excellent."

The match also marks the competitive debuts of Saints' close season signings, Sonny Nisic, Ferehi Tuilagi and Phil Adamson, the latter two on the bench.

Saints have signed the Oldham prop Michael Edwards. Edwards joins his home town club on a free transfer.

The Leeds coach, Graham Murray, is delaying a decision on who will play hooker for him in the tie of the round, against Wigan. Lee Jackson and Terry Newton, who have both played for Great Britain in the position, are both fit and in the 17-man squad, but Murray has yet to finalise who will start in the role on Sunday.

Britain's leading referee, Russell Smith, is to take charge of the Student Rugby League Varsity Match at Richmond on 9 March. "Russell took some persuading, because he didn't want to take someone else's appointment," said the Student Rugby League's director, Neil Wood. "But we convinced him that he would only help the profile of the game."

Yates fears another long ban after citing by Wasps

THE MAN from Medicine Hat is finding it impossible to escape the poison.

Kevin Yates, the international prop from Bath who was notoriously found guilty of biting an opponent's ear last season, has been cited by the Wasps management for alleged head-stamping during Sunday's Premiership match at Loftus Road. The irony was almost too bitter for words; yesterday's announcement came exactly a year after Yates saw an exciting future all but devastated by a six-month ban from the Rugby Football Union's disciplinary tribunal.

He must now contemplate a second ordeal before the hanging judges of Twickenham, thanks to a piece of video footage that, according to Wasps, shows him colluding with the head of Paul Valley, the Londoners' open-side flanker. Valley needed seven stitches in the resultant wound and given the relevant disciplinary antecedents, Yates can expect another lengthy career break if the verdict goes against him. Stamping usually carries a 12-week penalty, but as a "head job" is considered one of rugby's more serious misde-

RUGBY UNION

By CHRIS HEWETT

manours, another six-month sentence cannot be ruled out.

Neither Yates nor Andy Robinson the Bath coach, would comment yesterday, but this new affair came as a severe smack between the eyes to both men. It is conceivable that Yates, reportedly considering a move to New Zealand provincial rugby when his contract expires in May, has played his last game for the ailing West Country club.

Robinson, meanwhile, has enough on his plate as a result of the 35-0 humiliation at Wasps, without new allegations of thugery by one of his players.

Yates' reputation went into free-fall in January last year when he was accused of biting Simon Penn, the London Scottish flanker, during a Tetley's Bitter Cup tie at the Recreation Ground; Penn needed 25 stitches and later went public at a press conference swathed in bandages. Yates protested his innocence - he has never wavered from that stance - and spent a small fortune on legal repre-

sentation, but the RFU panel were not persuaded by his case.

Bath must be sick of disciplinary problems. Two of their other international forwards, Ben Sturman and Victor Ubogu, were summoned to answer sending-off charges this season, though both were acquitted.

Talking of internationals, Clive Woodward gave the clear-cut hint yesterday that Joel Stransky might be considered for England's World Cup duty when the tournament kicks off in October. Stransky is no Englishman, of course; as South African as biltong, the outside-half from Pietermaritzburg kicked the Springboks to the Webb Ellis Cup four years ago. But he qualifies for England in September under the three-year residency rule - he has been playing for Leicester since 1996 - and the national coach yesterday said that if his form justified inclusion this autumn, then included he would be.

"If he genuinely turns out to be better than the players we have, I would have no problem," said Woodward, who believes such an eventuality would be an indictment of England's player development programme. "We

had lunch with Joel and there is no doubt that he'd love to play for the team. I'm looking at every game he plays. As a professional coach of a professional team, it's my job to pick the best available."

One big name definitely included in the national set-up is Dick Best, whose spectacular success with London Irish has earned him an honorary selector's role with the England A and Sevens squads. Best successfully coached the England Test team under the management of Geoff Cook in the early 1990s, but failed to survive the appointment of Jack Rowell as head cook and bottlewasher in 1994.

It has been one of Best's constant beefs that the Rugby Football Union never had the courtesy to tell him he was sacked, but Woodward's outstanding management skills have obviously smoothed things over: The former career Harlequin is now a prime candidate to succeed Woodward as England coach at some point in the future, although he will face stern opposition from Gloucester's Richard Hill.

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Henderson is still keen on Sharpical

CHELTENHAM announced yesterday that the 50,000th and last ticket for Gold Cup day has now been sold, yet if the crowd is to have fighting-fit horses to bet on in five weeks' time, an immediate rise in Britain's overnight temperatures would be helpful.

The Festival week is marked off in red ink on every trainer's wall calendar from the first day of the season, but the period between the Tote Gold Trophy and the first weekend in March is almost as important, as the finishing touches are applied to six months of meticulous planning.

Trainers like Paul Nicholls could quickly find themselves with a dozen or more Festival candidates whose paths to Cheltenham could take an unwanted diversion.

Double Thriller, his Grand National favourite, was supposed to run in the Racing In Wessex Chase at Gloucester today, and will now prepare for the Gold Cup instead in the Jim Ford Chase at the same course in two weeks' time.

BY GREG WOOD

Earthmover, another of Nicholls' Gold Cup team, will be re-routed to Newbury on Saturday having been frustrated at Chepstow yesterday, as his trainer tries desperately to get another two races into the chassis before Cheltenham.

No trainer places quite as much emphasis on these three days in March as Nick Henderson.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Done And Dusted (Lingfield 4.30)
NB: Half Tone (Lingfield 3.00)

derson, who was either the leading or joint-best handler at the Festival in six of nine years between 1987 and 1993. He drew a blank last year, and saddled only one winner – the last one, Barns Bay – the season before that, but with leading contenders for both the Supreme Novice Hurdle and Triumph Hurdle, Henderson's will still be one of the first names to look for.

More immediately, Henderson will send Sharpical to Newbury for the Tote Gold Trophy on Saturday, which will be the gelding's first outing since he won the same race last year. An injury soon afterwards robbed him of a chance to face Istabraq in the Champion Hurdle, but that slightly dubious privilege could now come next month if his return to action proves acceptable.

"He's got a lot of talent and he's in the Champion, put it like that," Henderson said yesterday. "It's his first race of the season because I just haven't had time to get a race into him, but he's quite an easy horse to get ready. We'll just have to see what happens on Saturday."

Sharpical's success 12 months ago was due in part to a magnificent ride by Mick Fitzgerald, who held his mount up longer than many jockeys would have dared, before cantering past Kerawi with 100 yards to run.

"It was one of the great rides," Henderson said. "We ride him with exaggerated tactics, but it's not the case that he

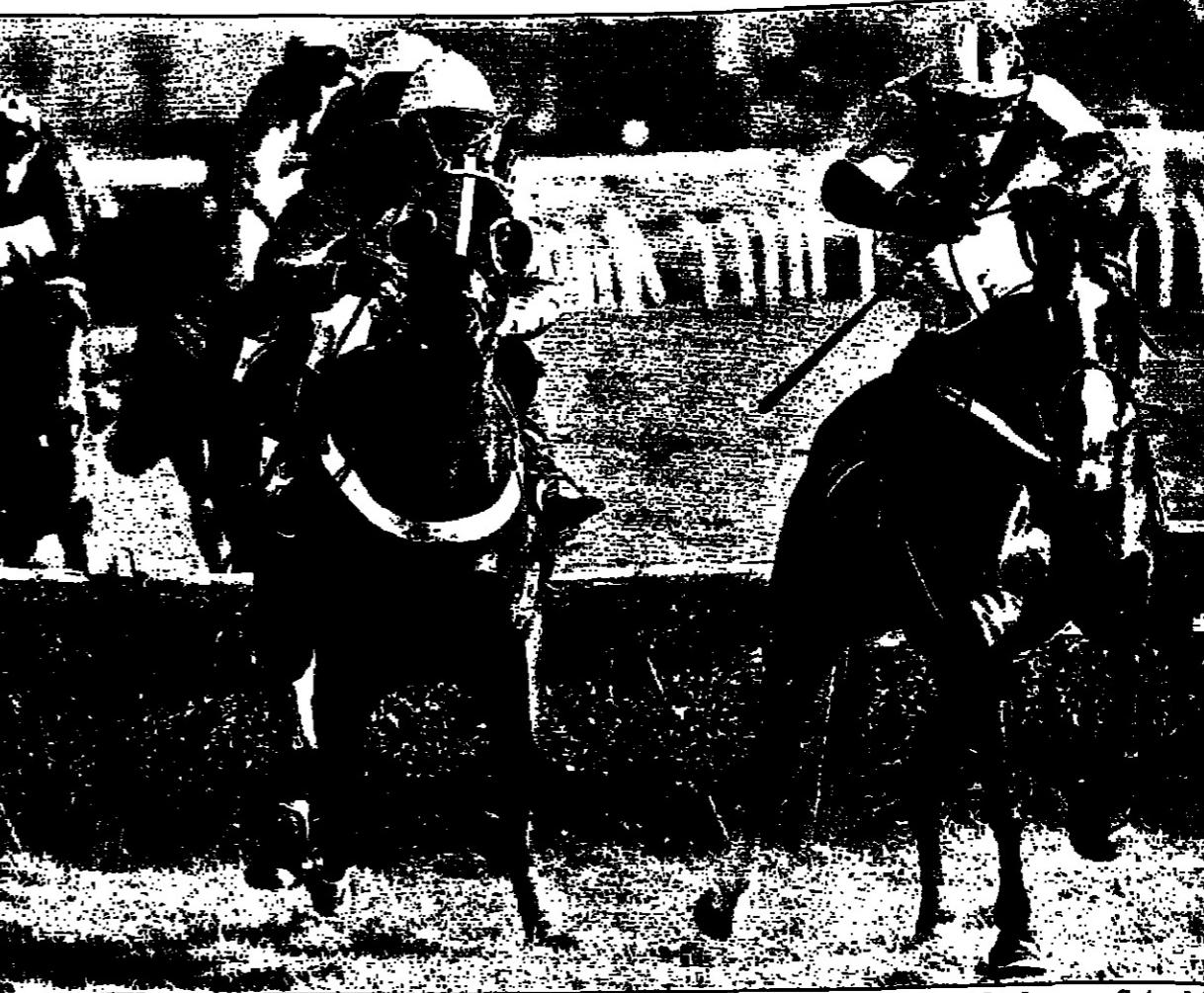
needs everything to go his own way. The Tote Gold Trophy has turned into the most extraordinary race, because three-quarters of the horses are within 1lb of each other; from 11 stone 7 to 12 stone, and the one thing it does is play into the hands of Finchies [the ante-post favourite]."

Both Hidebound and Katafino, Henderson's main hopes for Cheltenham, are reported to be in good form, although the weather may deny Katafino, who heads the market for the Triumph Hurdle, a run at Newbury on Friday.

"He coughed over Christmas but he's fine now and galloping away," Henderson said. "I think he'll almost certainly wait for either Huntingdon or Kempton the following week."

Tutchiev's task in Saturday's big race could become even more straightforward tomorrow when Wahiba Sands, the second-favourite, may come out – along with the David Nicholson-trained Midnight Legend.

"We will not make up our minds until Friday," David



Sharpical (left), beating Kerawi in last year's Tote Gold Trophy, is attempting a repeat at Newbury on Saturday

Johnson, Wahiba Sands' owner, said yesterday. "He was in the race on a racing weight but the horses at the top have all come out. I'm not very happy about that."

Yesterday saw the first full day's trading on the Grand National following the publication of the weights, and Double Thriller was a predictably popular choice. The 12-1 on offer

with both Ladbrokes and Coral yesterday morning had been cut to 9-1 by the evening.

But a more significant move was possibly that for Eudope, trained by Martin Pipe. A 20-1

chance when Coral's doors opened, the seven-year-old was first cut to 14-1 and, when that failed to stem the flow of money, the odds were dropped further to 12-1.

Racing bitten by more frost

HOPES ROSE last night that Newbury's two-day fixture due to start tomorrow can go ahead after higher temperatures took the frost out of the ground. Richard Osgood, a course spokesman, said yesterday: "The forecast is for a frost tonight and tomorrow, but for it to get warmer with cloud cover coming from the north. We are more confident than we were earlier in the week."

The going is good to soft on the hurdles track and good to soft with soft patches on the chase course.

Wincanton's card scheduled for today was called off yesterday. But the feature event, the Premier NH Auction Novice Hurdle which had attracted several Cheltenham-bound prospects, is to be run at the same track on 25 February.

Today's other jump fixture, at Huntingdon, is subject to an inspection at 7.30 this morning. Hugo Bevan, the clerk of the course, said: "I'd have to say that prospects are no higher than 50-50 at present."

HUNTER CHASE POINTERS

CHARING (6 Feb) Cracking Idea clocked the fastest time of the day in the Ladies Open. Never far away, he led at the fifth last fence and surged clear to score by 20 lengths from Doc Davies.

COTTONHAM (7 Feb) The Auctioneer – no match for the usual Poor Value last time – returned to winning form with an impressive victory in the Intermediate Mating oil and storming clear twice in what appeared an exceptional time for a maiden winner.

Ian Davies

FRIARS HAUGH (7 Feb) Faster Ron made all and jumped clear in the Restricted. He forged clear in the last two fences to beat Rapier by three lengths in a decent time.

Mountain Thyme was extremely impressive in Division Two of the Open Maiden. Settled in the middle of the field early, he led two out and stayed on gamely to beat Exuberant Mondial by four lengths in what appeared an exceptional time for a maiden winner.

RESULTS

WOLVERHAMPTON

Going: Standard. 1: CRASH CALL (10) 1st Cartier 20-1. 2: Order In Court (10) Mackay 20-1. 3: Lucky Touch (10) Martin Dwyer 10-1 fav. 4: RUMBLE (10) Ian Corlett 10-1. 5: ALMOND (10) S. Cooper 10-1. 6: KARATE KEEF (10) 1st Karate.

7: ram. 8: D. C. 9: T. W. 10: J. May by 10-1. 11: L. L. 12: J. L. 13: J. L. 14: J. L. 15: J. L. 16: J. L. 17: J. L. 18: J. L. 19: J. L. 20: J. L. 21: J. L. 22: J. L. 23: J. L. 24: J. L. 25: J. L. 26: J. L. 27: J. L. 28: J. L. 29: J. L. 30: J. L. 31: J. L. 32: J. L. 33: J. L. 34: J. L. 35: J. L. 36: J. L. 37: J. L. 38: J. L. 39: J. L. 40: J. L. 41: J. L. 42: J. L. 43: J. L. 44: J. L. 45: J. L. 46: J. L. 47: J. L. 48: J. L. 49: J. L. 50: J. L. 51: J. L. 52: J. L. 53: J. L. 54: J. L. 55: J. L. 56: J. L. 57: J. L. 58: J. L. 59: J. L. 60: J. L. 61: J. L. 62: J. L. 63: J. L. 64: J. L. 65: J. L. 66: J. L. 67: J. L. 68: J. L. 69: J. L. 70: J. L. 71: J. L. 72: J. L. 73: J. L. 74: J. L. 75: J. L. 76: J. L. 77: J. L. 78: J. L. 79: J. L. 80: J. L. 81: J. L. 82: J. L. 83: J. L. 84: J. L. 85: J. L. 86: J. L. 87: J. L. 88: J. L. 89: J. L. 90: J. L. 91: J. L. 92: J. L. 93: J. L. 94: J. L. 95: J. L. 96: J. L. 97: J. L. 98: J. L. 99: J. L. 100: J. L. 101: J. L. 102: J. L. 103: J. L. 104: J. L. 105: J. 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Fans unwilling to finance rise for Leboeuf

THE FOOTBALL Supporters' Association have urged Franck Leboeuf to consider where his wage increase will come from when he negotiates a new Stamford Bridge contract.

The French World Cup winner warned in a magazine interview that he did not want to be the "club crotin" where wages were concerned.

The 31-year-old earns about £1m a season with Chelsea after arriving in West London last season from Strasbourg for £2.5m. But the FSA's chairman, Alison Pilling, insists that the extra cash to supplement

BY IAN RODGERS

Leboeuf's salary should come from chairman Ken Bates' pocket and not via an increase in admission prices.

"Most fans believe that Premiership players are paid enough and most would consider they are paying quite enough – and if Franck Leboeuf thinks it is worth more he needs to think about where that money is coming from," Pilling said.

"If he thinks Ken Bates should be putting more money in the club, then most fans

would say 'fine'. But if it is the fans who should put more into the club, that's a different question. If Franck Leboeuf or any other Premier League player thinks they should be paid more, then they need to give some serious thought to where the money is coming from. If it's out of the profits made by the club, then that's one side. But if he thinks fans should pay more on the gate or through pay-per-view television, that's a very different story."

"At some point, fans will need to sit down seriously with bodies like the Professional

Footballers' Association and make sure that both fans and players get what they deserve out of the game."

The former Chelsea defender Paul Elliott has backed Leboeuf in his demand for higher wages from the Stamford Bridge club. He thinks that if the club are to remain among the country's elite they must secure Leboeuf's services for the future.

"You have to say Leboeuf is a top quality defender who has given super service to

Chelsea," Elliott said. "Ken Bates is a very decent and reasonable man. If he feels

Leboeuf has a justifiable case I'm sure he will put his hands in his pockets. I have no doubt about that."

"Leboeuf is a proven international and is excellent for Chelsea. I am sure the club will want to retain his services and I am sure at some stage in the future it will be best for both club and player to sit down and see if there is a possibility of extending his deal."

"He is a valuable asset to the club, and I am sure that has been more than recognised by Ken Bates."

Leboeuf said in the France

Wednesday, keeping the Czech coach on board even though the Italian Serie A club is mired in a serious slump.

The club's spokesman, Dario Brugnoli, confirmed the deal ties Zeman to Roma through until the end of next season, but would not reveal financial terms.

"I signed a very good contract when I came here. I've doubled it since and I hope to quadruple it soon. If the bosses don't make an effort, I may think about leaving. We'll see at the end of the season."

Roma gave Zdenek Zeman a one-year contract extension

into a equal seventh place in the 18-team First Division.

Zeman led Roma to a third-place finish last season, his first with the team. He had previously coached Lazio, Roma's city rivals, and Foglia.

The downturn has led to calls, among fans and in the media, for Zeman's dismissal. Such cries reached a peak after Roma's 3-1 defeat on Sunday against Venezia, who are fighting against relegation.

Roma have also drawn with the bottom club, Empoli, and lost to 17th-placed Salernitana in recent weeks.

Asprilla back to his old trickery

The erstwhile Magpie maverick was Colombia's colossus against Germany.

By Rupert Metcalf in Miami

WHEN FAUSTINO ASPRILLA was sent home early from France '98, accused of being a disruptive influence within the Colombian World Cup camp, it seemed that the talents of one of football's true mavericks might be lost to the international arena.

The former Newcastle striker is now back in favour; however. He was recalled by Colombia's new coach, Javier Alvarez, for last month's friendly at home to Denmark, and responded with a goal in a 1-1 draw.

On Tuesday, on a sultry Florida afternoon in the Orange Bowl, Asprilla was back to his best, scoring twice in a thrilling 3-3 draw with Germany. All the old tricks were on display: the twists and turns, the theatrical tumbles and the tormented appeals to the referee.

But with Colombia a man down for the entire second half after the debutant defender Alexander Lemus had been sent off for two foolish yellow cards, Asprilla had to work hard, too. He dropped back into midfield after the interval, and did his share of chasing back and defending.

Alvarez made it clear after the match, his second in charge

of Colombia, that Asprilla is now expected to labour for the common cause. "We have to avoid relying too much on one player," he said. "It is a collective game."

Asprilla is now without several of his old team-mates – both Carlos Valderrama and Freddy Rincon have retired from international football since the World Cup, and other veterans have been discarded by Alvarez. Against Germany the coach gave four players their debut, one of whom started the move that brought the opening goal in the 67th minute.

Henry Zambrano, boxed in by the corner flag on the left wing, dribbled his way into space and found the midfielder Arley Betancourt. He slid a superb pass through the German defence that gave Nelder Morantes the chance to cross for Asprilla to tap in from six yards.

It was a great team goal, and Asprilla celebrated with a typical somersault in front of the Colombian fans. Germany levelled within seven minutes, though, with Michael Preetz knocking the ball in after Oscar Cordoba had pushed past the end Ivan Cordoba found the net with a glancing header.

With a fine header from a Neuville cross 10 minutes after the interval. Playing against 10 men, it looked as though Germany would go on to win, but in a spirited display Colombia kept pushing men forward and they were rewarded in the 74th minute. The substitute goalkeeper, Jens Lehmann, was

judged to have brought down Jorge Bermudez and Asprilla converted the penalty with casual arrogance.

Marco Bode headed Germany ahead again after 74 minutes but still Colombia came back. Ten minutes from the end Ivan Cordoba found the net with a glancing header that met a well-flighted free-kick by Asprilla.

A draw was a fair conclusion to this friendly, but Germany will not be happy with conceding six goals in two games, after Saturday's 3-0 defeat to the United States in Jacksonville.

"We were under immense pressure after that result," admitted Germany's coach, Erich Ribbeck. He has been criticised for relying on too many veterans, but he insisted that "we still need the older players to guide the younger ones. We are only in the middle of our restructuring programme".

Sadly, he was not asked for his views on reincarnation.

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Rusedski is erased by erratic serve

AWAYERS
EMAND
CAH
IQUARY

GREG RUSEDSKI's prospects of reaching the quarter-finals of the \$1m (£625,000) Dubai Duty Free Open capitulated in extraordinary circumstances last night. One moment the British No 2 was coasting along, leading Francisco Clavet, of Spain, by a set and two breaks of serve; the next he was floundering his way out of the tournament, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2.

Clavet cracked Rusedski's famous serve seven times in nine attempts to take control of what had seemed a lost cause after the 30-year-old Spaniard had slumped to 0-3 in the second set.

Even when Rusedski double-faulted to lose the fourth game it seemed that the error would only be a blip on an otherwise satisfactory night's work in competition with a fellow left-hander. But the scene changed dramatically after Clavet saved two break points in the fifth game, having been warned in between for an audible obscenity.

Clavet stood and argued with the German umpire, Rudi Berger, instead of taking a rest during the changeover, but it transpired that he, not Rusedski, was now the player fired up for action. He immediately broke to love, balancing the set at 3-3.

Although Rusedski seemed to have steadied the situation, delivering a smash to break for 5-3, a couple of double-faults encouraged Clavet back into contention, and the Spaniard lobbed him for 4-4.

Rusedski rescued one set point in the 10th game with a volley, but double-faulted to 4-4 at 5-6, hauling himself back to deuce only for Clavet to strike on his third set point.

The arrival of the third set

TENNIS
By JOHN ROBERTS
in Dubai

did little to restore Rusedski's spirits. He was unable to make an impression on Clavet's serve in the opening game and the match evaporated in front of his eyes after he was broken for 0-2. Clavet will go on to play Germany's Nicolas Kiefer, ranked No 41, in the next round.

The 21-year-old Kiefer eliminated the No 6 seed, Albert Costa, of Spain, 6-3, 7-6, although towards the end of the second set it seemed that the German was going to fritter away his chances. He led 4-0 and had three match points, on Costa's serve, before the tie-break, and led 5-4 in the shoot-out before securing his place in the quarter-finals, 7-3, on his fifth match point.

Carlos Moya, the No 2 seed, advanced to the last eight with a 6-4, 6-4 win against Thomas Muster, the 1997 champion. The 31-year-old Muster still relishes a scrap, but Moya was determined to extend his run of three consecutive wins against the Austrian, who had given the Spaniard some harsh lessons in their first three matches.

Muster was on the wrong end of some dubious line calls, particularly when broken in the concluding game of the opening set, but he deserved his ire for himself, earning a warning for breaking his racket in frustration after a net cord in the 10th game of the second set hastened his departure.

Russia's Igor Korteneko upset Marc-Kevin Goellner of Germany 3-6, 7-6, 6-3 and advanced to the second round in his first appearance in the tournament. He surprised Laurence Tieleman of Italy on Monday, beating him 6-3, 3-1.

Results, Digest, page 29

SALT LAKE INQUIRY IMPLICATES 24

EBDON'S SLOW SHOW ENDS IN BOOS

THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee promised yesterday to consider expelling more members to restore its credibility and mollify sponsors as the Salt Lake City scandal broadened to implicate 20 per cent of IOC members.

"We will act decisively," said Anita DeFranz, an IOC vice-president from the United States.

IOC leaders read the 300-page report issued yesterday by a Salt Lake ethics panel, a document detailing more than \$1m (£600,000) in cash payments and other favours lavished on IOC members during the city's winning bid for the 2002 Winter Games. The report linked an additional 10 IOC members to the scandal, bringing to 24 the number of Olympic delegates accused of accepting excessive benefits.

The IOC said the ethics report was being forwarded to its own six-man panel investigating the Salt Lake case. The IOC executive board expects to receive "the earliest possible recommendations" from that panel, the IOC said in a statement from Lausanne, Switzerland.

"The IOC remains fully com-

OLYMPIC GAMES
By STEPHEN WILSON

mitted to investigating and taking action based on all available evidence," the statement said.

Last month the IOC panel identified 14 members involved in alleged excesses stemming from Salt Lake's bid. Nine of those members have either resigned or been expelled by the IOC executive board. Three others—including the executive board member Kim Un-yong of South Korea—remain under investigation, one received a warning and one has died.

The IOC noted that last month's expulsions were "based on evidence available at the time." Further expulsions are now likely before the special IOC assembly in Lausanne on 17 to 18 March.

"If you find something that's a real breach, we basically have only one sanction, and that's expulsion," said Dick Pound, the IOC vice-president who is leading the internal inquiry.

Jacques Rogge, an IOC executive board delegate who is on Pound's panel, said the commission would meet soon to re-

view the report, and said he was not surprised that more members were implicated.

He said a key issue for the IOC panel will be to determine whether members were guilty of actual ethical violations. "You have to differentiate between what is a breach of the line, and what is so-called 'lavish treatment,'" he said.

Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC president, has written to all cities which bid for the Olympics of 1998, 2000 and 2004, asking for any documented evidence of misconduct.

The IOC's marketing director, Michael Payne, who is in the United States meeting Olympic sponsors, claimed that the IOC is doing everything in its power to stamp out corruption and institute reform. "If the crisis is handled quickly, the movement will come out in a year or two a much stronger organisation," he said. "The results of the steps taken over the last six weeks are a clear indication of that. In the next six weeks, there will be more proof of how serious the organization is."

On Tuesday, the head of one Olympic sponsor, John Hancock Insurance, criticised the commission's handling of the crisis and suggested that Samaranch's tenure may be running out. But Payne rejected the continuing calls from outside the IOC for Samaranch to resign, saying the 78-year-old president is needed to lead the house-cleaning efforts. "If the president stepped down, you would have a presidential election with all the instability that would bring," Payne said. "That's the last thing you want at this stage."

Payne downplayed the decision by John Hancock to cancel negotiations with NBC for \$20m in television advertising.

"They aren't withdrawing from their sponsorship," he said.

"This issue is related to a media purchase, which is separate from the sponsorship. Several Olympic sponsors don't advertise at all on the broadcast."

Despite John Hancock's move, Payne said there was no crack in support from the Olympic sponsors who pay millions of dollars to help finance the Games. "The sponsors are standing, first of all, behind the Games, and second, behind the steps and action the IOC, Samaranch and the executive board are taking," Payne said.

SPORTING DIGEST

ATHLETICS
AMPERE INDOOR MEET (Selected):
100m: 10.1m (SA) 11.7m 50.51sec.
60m hurdles: 1.1 Hebert (SA) 34.92sec.
4x100m relay

BADMINTON
England's two successful doubles winners, Gordon Archer and Chris Langton, ranked recently as high as ninth in the world, are to split up.

BASKETBALL
BAF: Philadelphia 90 Detroit 86; Milwaukee Bucks 101 Minnesota Timberwolves 101; Miami Heat 74 San Antonio 70; Atlanta 87 Chicago 71; Utah 90 Dallas 79; Sacramento 112; New Orleans 95 Seattle 90; Golden State 77.

BATHTON
Two cold yesterday forced the postponement of the start of the World Championships at Konskile, in Finland, for the fifth consecutive day. Temperatures were 20 degrees warmer than on previous days, but at around -25°C were still cold. The competition limit is set at 20°C.

CRICKET

Hampshire have signed the 22-year-old Durham fast bowler Steve Tredwell on a one-year contract. He will provide cover for the injured Nicky Jarvis, who is expected to miss the first half of the season.

GYMNASIUM (for World Cup 14 ap to 21 June): G Salmed (Granada, 21); M Alfonso (Huelva, 21); J Garcia (Cordoba, 21); A Lopez (Barcelona, 21); A Basilio (West London, 21); P Strelak (Aberystwyth, 21); P Phillips (Sheffield, 21); S Smith (Aberystwyth, 21); P Strelak (Cardiff, 21); G Williamson (Clydesdale, 21).

CYCLING

MALLORCA TOUR: Fourth stage 117.3km, Cala Bassa-Cala Millor to Cala Rajada; 1. M Cipollini (It) 49'40"; 2. G. Pantani (It) 50'05"; 3. B. T. Steels (Bel) 50'45"; 4. J Hunt (GB); 5. G. M. Fagnani (It); 6. Cucco (It); 7. G. S. D'Amato (It); 8. S. Saccoccia (It); 9. G. S. D'Amato (It); 10. L. Rambaldi (It); 11. D. Cipollini (It); 12. G. Pantani (It); 13. G. S. D'Amato (It); 14. G. S. D'Amato (It); 15. G. S. D'Amato (It); 16. G. S. D'Amato (It); 17. G. S. D'Amato (It); 18. G. S. D'Amato (It); 19. G. S. D'Amato (It); 20. G. S. D'Amato (It); 21. G. S. D'Amato (It); 22. G. S. D'Amato (It); 23. G. S. D'Amato (It); 24. G. S. D'Amato (It); 25. G. S. D'Amato (It); 26. G. S. D'Amato (It); 27. G. S. D'Amato (It); 28. G. S. D'Amato (It); 29. G. S. D'Amato (It); 30. G. S. D'Amato (It); 31. G. S. D'Amato (It); 32. G. S. D'Amato (It); 33. G. S. D'Amato (It); 34. G. S. D'Amato (It); 35. G. S. D'Amato (It); 36. G. S. D'Amato (It); 37. G. S. D'Amato (It); 38. G. S. D'Amato (It); 39. G. S. 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SPORT

WIGAN'S NEW RUNNING MAN P25 • HILL LOST FOR WORDS P24

Clubs seek transfer harmony

A EUROPE-WIDE transfer window became a possibility yesterday following proposals from the newly formed Association of European Premier Leagues. The body also suggested a common European calendar for international fixtures, to avoid clashes with league matches, and said there should be a minimum number of players under the age of 21 in each team's squad.

The 13-strong group met at the offices of the Premier League, with the Sports Minister Tony Banks also in attendance. The three main ideas were put forward for further discussion at the association's next meeting, to be held in March.

The common transfer window policy is the most radical proposal as currently there are widely different arrangements, some leagues having cut-off deadlines and others having transfer windows at various times during the season.

The Premier League chief executive, Peter Lever, said: "We think it might be feasible

FOOTBALL
BY ALAN NIXON

for the leagues to come together on this point. There is feeling we need harmony throughout Europe to ensure fair play and it's something we will continue to discuss."

The concept of promoting home-grown youth players follows the Scottish Football Association's rule that says at least two Scottish-born players aged under 21 years must be included in each first-team squad.

The move to harmonise international dates is to try to limit the number of players missing club games to play in friendlies.

The association represents the leagues of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland, and is officially recognised by Uefa, football's European governing body.

Watford have signed the former Aston Villa, Wolves and

Chinese food forces Jackson back home

DARREN JACKSON, the Celtic forward, yesterday declared his desire to get back into the Parkhead team after refusing a chance to play football in China. His reason for turning down the move - the food.

Jackson, who spent time on loan with Coventry recently, was offered a transfer to the Chinese team, Dalian Wanda, last month. However, the 32-year-old, who played twice for Scotland at the World Cup last summer, decided to return to Glasgow at the weekend after a trial with the Chinese club.

"I went out there on a conditional contract and the Chinese were fantastic and treated me very well. But I am not the

best of eaters at the best of times and the food wasn't what I am used to," Jackson said.

"I felt I wasn't eating properly and I wasn't myself. I wanted to come back after a day but I felt I had to give it a go and I lasted eight days. But it wasn't for me and I came back."

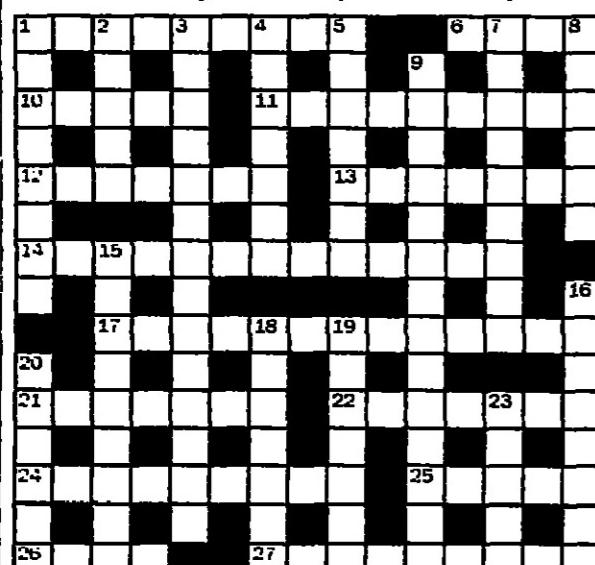
Having played only three games as a substitute in his loan spell at Coventry, Jackson faces a huge task to persuade Jozef Venglos, the Celtic head coach, that he merits renewed consideration for a first-team place.

"The boys are doing very well and I know it is going to be very hard to get back in," Jackson said.

Asprilla up to his old tricks, page 28

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No.3843 Thursday 11 February by Pedro



Wednesday's solution

BABY	TALK	SHADES
HAG	OC	EIC
ANNOUNCE	GAMBLE	S
SG	CAD	SEL
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A word in your ear: The Australian pace bowler Glenn McGrath and England's captain, Alec Stewart, seem to be having communication problems during yesterday's first one-day final in Sydney

Reuters



England blew it, admits Stewart

CRICKET

BY KIERON DALEY

in Sydney

THE ENGLAND captain, Alec Stewart, said his players had only themselves to blame after blowing a winning position in Wednesday's 10-run defeat by Australia in the opening final of the triangular series.

Stewart said England should have won the 50 overs day-night match after reaching 198 for 4 chasing 233. But Australia turned the game around by taking five wickets for six runs in 23 balls to take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-three finals.

"We did very well to lose it," Stewart said. "We shouldn't have lost that game. We needed 35 runs off eight overs with six wickets in hand. It was definitely a game we should have won."

"We've got to make sure we tighten up our cricket at the crunch times. Eighty percent of what we did was good but the other 20 percent cost us the game," Stewart said. "If we can fix that 20 per cent we can definitely win back-to-back matches."

Stewart's opposite number, Shane Warne, said he was relieved to have won the match but paid tribute to his bowlers for the way they fought back. "They [England] looked like they were going to coast home when they needed less than a run a ball," Warne said. "But I think we just created the pressure and forced them into bad shots. That's the beauty of this current Australian side. We seem to be able to pull something out of the bag when we need to."

The only dismal note for Australia was that Michael Bevan, their top scorer with 69 not out, will miss the rest of the series after dislocating a finger while fielding.

Once Hussain had recklessly charged Shane Warne and been stumped, England were knocked out of cruise control and spluttered to a 10-run defeat with four balls remaining.

At one point, Hussain and Warne appeared to have a brief verbal altercation in the middle, but Stewart said he was not aware of "any battle of wits, or battle of words".

Warne was more forthcoming, however. The Australian captain revealed: "He hit me for a slog-sweep for four. I said to him 'You are allowed to get one out of 20'. The next minute he kept going. I wasn't exactly sure what was happening."

"He was pretty fired up but he's allowed to be. I suppose in the end I was just glad to get him out; a pretty satisfying wicket. I was trying to get up his nose a little bit. He played a pretty ordinary shot as we were applying the pressure."

Match report, page 27

Metcalfe slams Scots' structure

SCOTLAND'S FULL-BACK, Glenn Metcalfe, admitted he may play his rugby elsewhere next season if officials cannot come up with a suitable structure for the professional game north of the border.

The New Zealander, who has lived in Glasgow for several years, is ready to leave if the super districts are not given a competitive fixture list.

Metcalfe missed much of Glasgow Caledonians' European Cup campaign through injury this season but proved his fitness sufficiently in the Welsh Rugby Union Challenge Trophy last month to win back his international place.

Last Saturday's Five Nations win over Wales was the 27-year-old's home debut after his first caps against Australia last summer, but Murrayfield may be the only venue Scottish rugby fans can catch him in future.

"We had a great squad with Caley this year but even getting everyone together at one venue for training was difficult.

"We all got on really well but

we never really got the chance to create that club spirit with people coming from all over. We should have been taking teams

apart with the players we had but I think we lost a bit of that club feeling where you play the game and then go and have a drink together afterwards.

"Instead we had people driving a couple of hours a day to get there and heading their ways afterwards."

While talks are currently taking place aimed at the creation of a possible "Celtic" or "Gaelic" league for next season,

Metcalfe believes Ulster's European Cup triumph has provided a possible template for Scotland to follow.

To question the wisdom of the amalgamation of Glasgow and the Caledonia Reds.

And while the Edinburgh Reivers fared slightly better but still faltered on the verge of the quarter-finals, Metcalfe believes a return to a more regionalised structure may be the answer.

"I still want to play rugby in Scotland but everything has to be right off the pitch for that to happen," he said yesterday.

"If it is anything like the structure this year I am not sure I want to be part of it because I want to play meaningful rugby every week."

"We had a great squad with Caley this year but even getting everyone together at one venue for training was difficult.

"We all got on really well but

we never really got the chance to create that club spirit with people coming from all over. We should have been taking teams

pressure with there being only four matches and there is no leeway or margin for error.

"But I felt a lot calmer and more controlled beforehand because I do suffer from nerves. I was told to run the ball back at them as much as possible and I thought I did that OK."

Metcalfe took time out to give high-school children in Drumbach - on the outskirts of Glasgow - a master class today alongside his Scotland team-mate Gordon Bulloch as part of a rugby initiative throughout Scotland's schools.

"It is good to come back and be involved in this kind of project," said Bulloch, who has risen through the ranks at district and national levels to become his country's No 1 hooker.

"You come to schools like this and you can see the raw talent that is there. If even only one small child wants to take up the game and shows up, well, then it is worthwhile."

Yates cited page 25



Metcalfe: 'Added pressure'

THURSDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

England
blew it,
admits
Stewart

CRICKET



Zemlianichenko Alexander

Resign? Over his dead body

Fate can be terribly cruel. Just after Boris Yeltsin touched down, returning from King Hussein's funeral, his Ilyushin-96 presidential plane was in a collision. Its wing hit a jet carrying the Italian Prime Minister; reports said later that Rome's man was taxiing "contrary to instructions".

Though the damage was slight, it was the final humiliation in an expedition that was fraught with risk from the outset. Looking ill and disoriented, Boris Yeltsin spent less than three hours in Jordan before bolting home, leaving the world even more convinced that his days are numbered. The Russian papers were derisive. "Yeltsin did not make it to the grave but was very close to it," said *Moskovskiye Komsomoletsy*.

Why on earth did he go? His doctors warned against it. He was not particularly close to the King, and was certainly less involved in the Middle East than his Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov – the obvious choice as Russia's representative.

Moreover, his foreign ventures often produce disasters. No Yeltsin obituary will omit his failure to disembark from his plane in Ireland in 1994, or his ill-fated attempts to conduct an orchestra in Berlin. As his physical and mental decline has steepened, these episodes have become less comic than sad, and more frequent.

In Sweden in late 1997, he caused astonishment by suggesting that the Japanese and Germans had nuclear weapons; in Uzbekistan last year, he almost keeled over in front of the TV cameras. Following day in Kazakhstan, he looked astonishingly ashen – a lost, drugged figure who seemed barely able to summon up the mental strength to sign a document. It took him 25 seconds to complete his signature; then he shuffled out, after mumbling angrily about the press telling lies.

So why did he go to the funeral? The answer is part personality and part politics. It was the desperate act of a leader worried about his diminished status on the world stage. It was also that of a politician badly irked by evidence that another – Mr Primakov – had stealthily taken the reins of power.

Boris Yeltsin cares much about how history will view him. Entwined deep within his complex character is a fear that he will be remembered not as a world statesman, who – in his winning, rough-hewn way – piloted an empire through the agony of collapse, but as someone who failed to grow much beyond his roots as a Siberian party boss, whose actions were primarily determined by an instinct to survive – just like other former party apparatchiks who still control the power and perks across many of Russia's regions.

A year ago, he could have expected better. Reforms and privatisation (although appallingly corrupt) were staggering along. The rouble was stable.

Boris Yeltsin is a hobbled figure on the world stage. He has survived double pneumonia, bronchitis, heart trouble and a bleeding ulcer, yet he is a political corpse, hated at home, a laughing stock abroad. And the vultures are hovering. So why is he hanging on to power?

Predictions of civil war and revolution had proved wrong. Yeltsin had returned to power in an election which, by post-Soviet standards, was clean-ish (although there were campaign finance violations and grossly biased media coverage). The war in Chechnya remained unforgiven by Russians, but in the West – which generally paid it far too little attention in the first place – it was quickly being forgotten. There was a chance that history would be generous, remembering him as the defiant figure who bravely confronted hardline coup plotters in 1991 from the turret of a tank.

Now, the best of these achievements are in ruins. Tens of thousands of skilled, young, urban Russians, the beginnings of a consumer middle class, are jobless. The rouble is worth a quarter of its value in mid-1998; Russia has – at least for the time being – alienated the international financial community.

The nation's misery is measured by a pulse of individual tragedies: a pensioner who immolated himself on Red Square; rampaging soldiers who slaughtered their comrades and themselves with amazing regularity; thieves who cut off the hair of bus passengers to sell it; workers paid not in cash but in loo rolls or canned food; countless children begging on the streets; three girls – not one older than 14 – who, after writing a suicide note, on Monday hurried themselves to their deaths from an eighth-storey window. (Whatever their motives – be they unrequited love or a cult's influence – this horror says much about the alienation of youth, parenthood, and a derelict education system.)

If you explore the wreckage, the charitably minded can still find reasons to give credit to the President. Today's Russians can say and read what they like; and – for the minority with the money – can travel freely. In contrast to the United States, the world's chief sermoniser on human rights, Russia has suspended capital punishment.

Yet this is overshadowed by larger problems. Boris Yeltsin is hated at home – three-quarters of his population want to see him impeached – and regarded with a mixture of pity and dismay abroad. In his twilight years, he can count this only by resorting to a tactic at which he used to be a maestro – grand, unexpected stunts.

There was a trace of this in St Petersburg last summer when he appeared at the reburial of Nicholas II and his family. But, as the Jordan fiasco



Top, Yeltsin struggles to get up after a meeting at the Kremlin. Above, Yevgeny Primakov, Russia's 'de facto' leader AP

proved, his touch has deserted him. He has acquired the air of an ageing actor long ago stripped of the lead, who keeps blundering out of the wings in the hope of stealing into a spotlight occupied by others.

In reality, Boris Yeltsin's presidency ended five months ago, after he sacked his government (led by the 38-year-old Sergei Kiriyenko) – the second to go within a few months – after it had announced a default of foreign and domestic debts and aban-

doned the battle to defend the rouble.

His final demise came when the State Duma, the lower house, rejected his nomination for prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, who had already done the job before – dismal in the eyes of most Russians. A compromise candidate, Yevgeny Primakov, the Foreign Minister was ushered in, posing as a loyal servant who was too old (69, a year older than Mr Yeltsin) to have any greater ambitions. Humiliated, the President returned to the shadows, in which he has hidden for much of his second term, wrestling with illness.

Since then Mr Primakov has seized the initiative, steadily securing the status of Russia's "de facto"

leader. After a cautious start, his presidential aspirations have grown more blatant. He has assiduously wooed the Duma's powerful Communists, and has courted regional leaders, both key power bases. Allies from his days as foreign intelligence chief have been planted in strategic jobs. At his back stands a government that has little sympathy for the Kremlin or its occupant, but plenty for Soviet methods.

When Mr Primakov first took over the Premier's job, Mr Yeltsin appeared resigned to life in the twilight; his aides conceded that he was no longer governing day to day but was working on constitutional issues. His weekly radio addresses stopped, and his staged appearances on TV grew rarer.

But what he cannot have expected – and clearly resents – is the manner in which Mr Primakov has turned his fire-power on the Kremlin itself. The Premier has launched a campaign against the oligarchic Boris Berezovsky, a friend of Mr Yeltsin's influential daughter Tatyana, a man who until recently could make or break a government. Two companies – affiliates of the oil conglomerate Sibneft, and Aeroflot – linked to the tycoon were raided by police amid allegations that he was running a private intelligence-gathering operation which spied on the Kremlin.

Nor was the President amused when Mr Primakov went to parliament flourishing a deal in which Mr Yeltsin would get immunity from prosecution in retirement and an end to the (largely symbolic) impeachment proceedings against him in return for an agreement not to dissolve the legislature or sack the government. The President rejected the offer with warnings that he was not about to give away any of his constitutional powers.

Throughout, Mr Primakov has insisted that he has no desire for the top job. But there is a sense, hard to pinpoint, but palpable, that he is quietly being anointed as the heir to the Kremlin, as the monolithic forces that shape the land – the minerals monopolies, the regional elite, the media – gradually coalesce around him. A transfer of power, a murky process in which the ballot box will play but a minor role, is under way. So much for democracy.

This impression is underscored by most of the other likely contenders for the Kremlin who – for all their shrillness – do not seem ready to do battle. General Alexander Lebed, governor of Krasnoyarsk,

is collapsing beneath the weight of running a vast Siberian region. Russia's democrats – a much-abused term embracing Thatcherite economists, liberal democrats and non-ideological super-rich with fortunes to defend – have proved incapable of unity, and are too widely disliked to have a hope.

It is questionable whether Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communists, and runner-up at the last election, really wants the presidency. He runs the only nationwide political party, and can still expect to muster the support of one in five Russian voters. Yet true power could quickly shatter the coalition of Stalinists, mouth-frothing nationalists and progressive socialists who stand behind him. Given the sums of money at stake in Russia, and the national habit of settling scores with a Kalashnikov, his life would be at risk.

Only one man, the formidable mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, seems genuinely keen to compete for the presidency.

Thus, for now, Boris Yeltsin is tolerated. Critically, this allows him to fulfil one of his goals, again with an eye to history. By completing his term, he takes another step towards ensuring that the constitution – a document that he forced through in a suspect 1993 referendum, and which is still widely ignored – becomes law. It is an issue about which he really seems to care.

For many months, Western TV crews have been on death watch in Moscow, confined to the capital. For months, obituaries have been ready in newspaper offices around the world. Yet, though a political corpse, Boris Yeltsin is not dead yet. He has been under assault from an array of conditions that would floor many another; which – if the Kremlin is to be believed – include double pneumonia, bronchitis, heart trouble, a bleeding ulcer, colds, flu and throat afflictions. But it is not impossible that he will stage the example of another equally accomplished boozier Winston Churchill, whose heart and health caused his doctor concern from before the start of the war. He died at 91 – a decade after his resignation in 1955, much of which time was spent staving into a coal fire with a rug on his knees.

Sick though he is, Boris Yeltsin could stagger on for a while yet. Certainly, his aides – led now by a former KGB general – are trying to discourage those full-time mourners who have long been wringing their hands at their boss's graveside. This week a senior Kremlin official said that there would be more outings to France, Germany and – perilously, given the distance and conditions – to Africa and Latin America, before his term ends in mid-2000.

Russians, fearful of more embarrassment, will pray that he stays at home. So will the Moscow political establishment, and his sympathisers in the West. But this is a man with a famously perverse nature. Those are just the sort of sentiments that will encourage Boris Yeltsin to make one more Lear-like lurch on to the stage.

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EDUCATION

Rethink law reform

Sir: The Access to Justice Bill is set to revolutionise legal aid, from which 3.5 million people benefit last year.

For the first time its budget is to be capped and citizens denied free choice amongst competent solicitors willing to take their cases. Further, since criminal legal aid is to have budget priority, civil legal aid will only get what is left.

The Lord Chancellor was right when he told the Bar Conference in 1996 that "cost capping is unattractive in principle [and] would in practice become a discretionary benefit, available at bureaucratic disposal; a benefit which would have to be disallowed when the money ran out..."

The highly dirigiste system by which the Legal Services Commission will keep within the cap will reduce the 10,600 solicitors' offices which currently do legal aid to about 3,000 quality-assured firms. This will be primarily achieved by competitive block tendering, which, according to classical wholesaling assumptions, will enable the commission to buy bulk legal services at cut prices.

This is, however, cloud-cuckoo land (especially since the Government claims that quality will not be affected). Legal aid is already the lowest-paying work done by solicitors, yielding roughly half what private client work returns.

All that is not enough. Money claims (particularly personal injury ones) are to be excluded from legal aid on the basis that poor claimants can in future find solicitors to act under conditional fee agreements. But solicitors won't want difficult or low-value cases, and with soaring premiums for costs insurance, and pre-agreement costs to pay for thousands of people will lose their chance of redress.

It is not even as if the Legal Aid budget is any longer "out of control". The existing regime has largely taken care of that and could go further if available checks and balances were better used.

The Law Society, the Bar Council, the Legal Action Group, the Legal Aid Practitioners Group and many experienced Labour lawyers are urging the Government to think again. It would be greatly to their credit if they did.

Lord PHILLIPS OF SUDSBURY

House of Lords

London SW1

A leader for London

Sir: David Aaronovitch's line that anyone who is not New Labour is irresponsible and like a teenager is no argument at all ("These rebels may be game for a laugh, but they're good for nothing", 9 February). Many of us support Ken Livingstone because we have long memories, not short ones. He got things done and he had a transport policy. For people who try to get about London, that is as important as his jokes.

I am surprised Aaronovitch did not observe that Livingstone's supporters do not wash their milk bottles. Perhaps he ran out of space.

JOAN CLANCHY

London NW6

Sir: The saga of Ken Livingstone's thwarted attempts to stand as mayor of London clearly illustrates a fundamental point: elections are only one obvious element of a functioning democracy. The system by which parties select candidates is at least as important, since it determines how much of a meaningful choice the electorate is given.

The Labour leadership has accelerated a trend of removing selection powers from publicly accessible bodies and centralising them within the private executive. This should be of grave concern to all those concerned about the quality of British democracy.

GILES BURGESS

Seattle, Washington, USA

Sir: Your report that inner London "heads the wealth league" (10 February) is misleading. Inner London may be the top producer of



Winter in Moscow No 4: Yuri receiving treatment for frostbite at a medical clinic for homeless people. There are an estimated 100,000 homeless people in Moscow, in temperatures averaging -20°C

Andy Johnstone

wealth, but its inhabitants are far from being the richest.

Inner London contains some of the poorest areas in Britain. Indeed, of the 20 poorest boroughs in Britain, 14 are in London.

While Londoners earn more, the cost of living is higher, with the effect that the standard of living in the capital is below the UK average.

JEFFREY ARCHER
(Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare)
House of Lords
London SW1

Office about the payoff to a fictitious source of the leak that had disappeared to Argentina!

The redeeming feature of this outrageous conspiracy is that everyone involved thought the letter was real. They believed they were acting in the national interest. The interests of the Conservative Party were ruthlessly pursued under that banner:

The Rev PAUL NICHOLSON
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire
Mad scientist

Sir: Any religion sounds barking mad except to those brought up in it," writes Professor Dawkins (letter, 9 February). However, he fails to mention that most areas of science sound equally "barking mad".

"I am the product of a fish" doesn't sound totally sensible, and yet the theory of evolution relies on it. This letter arrived by e-mail at *The Independent's* offices because millions of tiny particles, which aren't always particles but are sometimes waves, vibrated down a piece of copper and were converted into words by a piece of silicon. Sound "barking mad"?

If those brought up in a religion believe something that is "barking mad", then it is a pity that Richard Dawkins couldn't be bothered to find out what Christianity teaches.

The point of Jesus' death was to pay for our sin. We all sin and no

one (except Jesus) has led a perfect life. You only need to look at one of the papers to see that.

It was by Jesus's sacrifice of himself that my sin has been paid for. I wonder who Professor Dawkins wishes to pay for his own sin—it'll either be himself or Jesus.

And there are plenty of Christians, like myself, who were not brought up in it.

GRAHAM POINTER
St Andrews, Fife

of England? No, sir, even those who carefully and thoughtfully plan their families act from purely selfish motives—they want children—and that is just as it should be.

Many of the dire social problems we are creating for ourselves could be largely avoided if people asked themselves exactly why they were initiating pregnancies. We pay more attention to the purchase of a car or a cardigan than we do to one of the most solemnly responsible and potentially wonderful acts possible, the production of a new person.

PETER GOLDBRAITH
Leicester

Little pets

Sir: Why do people have children? Let us be honest. Children in Britain are conceived because social convention and prospective grandparents demand it, through genuine error, through heedlessness, following a surfeit of alcohol, because of neurotic need,

or because some people love children (or think they do until they've got one). Also, as Terence Blacker points out (Comment, 9 February), they are desired as designer accessories or pets.

In the light of these motivations,

how can Jean Molloy (Letter, 9 February), maintain that child-rearing is a "social" and not an individual project? Does she really believe that intending (or unintending) parents are thinking

... embedded ... in people's lives?" As in his dimly uncritical puff for Andy Parfitt ("They're playing our time again", 9 February), Rhys Williams overlooks the controller of Radio 1's crowning achievement in his relentless drive downmarket. I refer to the shafting of his namesake.

Andy Kershaw's world music and roots programme has long been a haven of rare breadth and depth amid the wastes of shallow pop and pap. At the second attempt—the first was defeated by a listener backlash—Parfitt has banished this from its established evening slot to the wee small hours after midnight. Very considerate of him, for those of us who work 9 to 5. And pretty hypocritical for someone who's quoted as opposing schedule changes that muck about with "familiar voices ... embedded ... in people's lives."

As a public service broadcaster, the BBC is supposed to give us quality and variety. Surely one measly two-hour slot per week (barely 1 per cent of total output) at a civilized hour, to cover a thriving genre which just happens to be the music of most of our planet, is not too much to expect even from the narrow-minded ratings-chaser that Parfitt is oddly proud to be.

AIDAN FOSTER-CARTER
Birmingham

Desert war threat

Sir: On 11 February the UN peace mission in the Western Sahara may be withdrawn. If it is, war will almost certainly ensue there within days.

The UN mission is in the area attempting to maintain a ceasefire between the occupation forces of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario, who represent the indigenous people of the area, the Saharawi. The UN's other task was to oversee a referendum on the future of the territory, forcibly occupied by Morocco in 1975, a referendum that Morocco agreed to in 1997 but which it has refused to implement.

The UN Secretary-General cites a "lack of political will" on the part of the Moroccan authorities for the breakdown in the situation. But Morocco "will" stay in military occupation of the Western Sahara is bolstered by a £5 per annum handout from every man woman and child in the UK, via the EU aid budget. The £280m involved is used by the Moroccan authorities through budgetary transfers to ease the £1m per day cost of the military occupation of the Western Sahara.

Morocco is hugely dependent on British and European tourism. If war breaks out in the Western Sahara it may well spread throughout Morocco and the other countries in the region. I would ask your readers, many of whom vacation in Morocco, to consider these facts when deciding on this year's holiday destination.

Lord WISE
House of Lords
London SW1

Control of the Net

Sir: In his Right of Reply (8 February), John Carr castigates libertarians who oppose government regulation of the Internet as nihilistic and cynical. He then states that while he has no wish to interfere with whatever adults may choose to view, there has to be protection for children.

I oppose government regulation of the Net not because I wish to plumb the depths of depravity, but because as an adult I am capable of exercising my own judgment. As a parent, I don't want my daughter viewing material I consider inappropriate. I will therefore supervise her use of the Net until she has sufficient judgement and maturity to decide for herself. I would rather take the trouble to do this than rely on government.

DAVE AMIS
Stanford le Hope, Essex

Third World rights

Sir: Professor Kenneth Minogue's racist polemic ("Arguing the case for the nation state" (Podium, 5 February)) must be rejected as post-imperialist nonsense. His suggestion that the peoples of Africa "most notably lack" certain "invisibly moral virtues" possessed by "us in the West" is absurd. Globalisation exacerbates inequalities of wealth but not for the reasons suggested by Professor Minogue. War economies are not the monopoly of any one country or region.

A front-page article in the same issue ("Rebuke for Cook over Sierra Leone") refers to the "arms to Sierra Leone affair". The global arms bazaar has more to do with current economic crises than the presence or absence of any "moral virtues".

"Democracy, I have no doubt, is doomed," says Professor Minogue. The end of apartheid in South Africa is evidence to the contrary. Notwithstanding the persistence of racism, even among some intellectuals, fundamental human rights are universal and must be constantly defended against those who claim the superiority of "Western" civilisation.

ANTHONY H RICHMOND
Emeritus Professor of Sociology
York University, Toronto

Pass the word ...

Sir: Time to huddle Chris Woodhead, I think.

JULIE BRINTON
Macclesfield, Cheshire

You say genetically modified tomato – and I say no

SO WHAT'S all this genetic engineering, then?

I beg your pardon?

This genetic engineering. What's it all about, then?

Oh, you mean, this business of trying to isolate the gene for schizophrenia or homosexuality or baldness, or whatever you disapprove of, and trying to eliminate it?

My goodness! I didn't know tomatoes were ever homosexual or bald...

Ah, tomatoes! You're not talking about people. You're talking about genetic modification of vegetables and crops...

Yes. And it's always tomatoes, for some reason. Nobody ever seems to get into a pickle about apples or oranges, only tomatoes. Why is that?

Probably because more people

in Britain try to grow their own tomatoes than any other vegetable, so they see it as a kind of private preserve. Touch my tomato and you touch my soul. An Englishman's home is his greenhouse. We see tomatoes as very British – even though they come from abroad.

From Italy, you mean?

No, no, no. They went to Italy. But they originally came from South America, from the Andes. Where potatoes also came from.

Good heavens. So, before 1492 European culture survived entirely without the help of spuds or tomatoes?

Yes.

Extraordinary.

Not so extraordinary as the fact that in the years since 1492 the Italians have used the tomato to create a wonderful national cuisine.

and the Americans have used it to create nothing but ketchup.

And it is this very same Americans who now want to alter the tomato?

I think so.

And why do they want to alter tomatoes genetically?

To make them last longer. To resist disease. To make them redder and shinier and bigger. All the things that supermarkets like. If they could genetically alter them to make them square and easier to pack, they would.

And tastier, too, and cheaper presumably?

No. Supermarkets aren't interested in making things tastier. Or even cheaper.

So how do supermarkets want to change things?

By making them more conve-

nient. What appeals to a supermarket is a stack of tomatoes lying very near a stack of washing

powders and not far from the crisps and biscuits.

Could a tomato be genetically engineered to be near washing powders and crisps?

Not yet.

Could a customer be genetically altered to prefer tomatoes in supermarkets?

No. He doesn't have to be. It is already done through cultural conditioning. A customer is gradually led to believe over the years that tomatoes in supermarkets are cheaper, better and tastier than what you get in the local shop.

And they?

Of course not. They don't have to be. As long as the customer thinks they are, it doesn't matter whether they actually are or not.

So you're against genetic engineering?

Not necessarily. I'm just against supermarket philosophy. I agree with TV chef Anthony Worrall Thompson, who urged supermarkets to stop filling their shelves with new products that nobody wants, like disgusting lemon-flavoured creams in aerosols, and give more space to fresh food. I agree with him and I disagree with Moira Hillman.

Who is Moira Hillman?

She is a market intelligence officer.

Do you think a supermarket spokesperson can ever be genetically modified to acquire super-intelligence?

Not in our lifetime, I fear.

IF YOU want to know more, send for our leaflet, "OK, I May Go and Spend a Fortune Once a Week at Sainsbury's Or Tesco, But That Doesn't Mean I Approve of What I'm Doing".



MILES KINGTON

*"Touch my tomato and you touch my soul.
An Englishman's home is his greenhouse"*

What appeals to a supermarket is a stack of tomatoes lying very near a stack of washing

So who if the p

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A cautious proposal caught up in some damaging spin

ONCE UPON a time, welfare reform was going to be New Labour's big idea. It was all about "thinking the unthinkable". It was to be the Government's abiding legacy, on a historical par with old-age pensions and the National Health Service. Then reality set in. Frank Field and Harriet Harman were sacked and Social Security was handed to the pragmatic Alistair Darling, a shrewd man who will not fall into the elephant trap of "big bang", welfare reform. For that, at least, we should be grateful.

Many of Mr Darling's proposals are modest, if rather offensively oversold by the spin doctors. This is not the "tough welfare crackdown" it is made out to be. The unemployed can already lose Jobseeker's Allowance if they turn down a reasonable offer of work. The new "single gateway" means that no claimant will stay on benefit unless he or she attends a "back-to-work" interview every five years. That should not be too onerous.

The Government is right to help people with disabilities and lone parents into work, if – and only if – that is what they are able to do. But providing quality advice, subsidising the child-care costs of lone parents who want to work and investing in people with disabilities, will cost the Government more money, even though it would be cash well spent. Far too many intelligent and talented disabled people remain excluded from the jobs market. We haven't heard much about such things.

But what is truly insidious is not the detail of Mr Darling's policies, but some of their underlying assumptions, assumptions carried over from the Tories, and revealed by colourful spin.

Given all the soundbites about "something-for-nothing dependency", one would think that, to use the economist's jargon, there was no such thing as involuntary unemployment. Ministers talk as though the jobs really were there for the unemployed if only they could be persuaded to take them. But if unemployment could be solved by increasing the frequency of patronising "restart" interviews and the like, we should have seen full employment long ago. What really affects unemployment, as Mr Darling's colleague Mr Byers pointed out last week, is the health of the economy, entrepreneurship, competition, and education and training (the high-quality variety, that is).

Another assumption abroad is that all lone parents ought to be at work. Mr Darling should say, clearly, that lone parents' choice to remain at home with their children is something to be respected, not resented. The balance between work and care can only be struck by the individual.

Mr Darling should not spoil his pragmatic approach by spreading silly slogans about the true nature of unemployment. The cycle of "something-for-nothing" soundbites must be broken.



Prosperity is the best means of birth control

TAKEN AT face value, the figures are terrifying. In a few months' time, the world's population will reach 6 billion, having doubled in less than 40 years. It took all of history until 1804 for humankind to chalk up its first billion. Adding a sixth one has taken just 12 years and, according to data presented to the current UN Population Forum in The Hague, world population will cease growing only around 2200, when it will have reached 11 billion. That is assuming that climatic catastrophe, environmental collapse or military Armageddon has not already put us out of our overcrowded misery.

But there is no reason to despair. For one thing, the population explosion reflects well, not badly, on our species. It has been caused not by some malign genetic failure, but by success – by advances in techniques of food production,

sanitation and health care that have increased wealth and life expectancy beyond the dreams of even 100 years ago.

Second, history, and above all the history of this ever-faster-forward century, is littered with false predictions of apocalypse. Not long before it began, wise souls were forecasting that on then current trends in public transport, London would soon be buried under several feet of horse manure. Two decades ago, we were being warned of how only coal and nuclear energy could prevent an energy shortage that would halt economic expansion in its tracks. Today, the oil price stands at less than a third of its 1979 level, nuclear power is discredited, and boundless reserves of far cleaner natural gas have sent the coal industry the way of the horse-drawn carriage. And now the micro-processor and the microchip: a third industrial revolution still in its infancy, which will surely make it easier, in ways we can hardly imagine, for this much-abused planet to accommodate still more of us.

Even so, simple Micawberism is not enough. We cannot

trust for ever that some technological *deus ex machina* will save us from our fecundity. Nor have we in the developed world the right to demand that the poorer two-thirds of humanity forgo the economic wealth we enjoy, in the interests of the ozone layer and of preventing global warming. Indeed, as demographers tirelessly point out, nothing is as effective in reducing the size of Third-World families as rising living standards. Growth, in short, must be encouraged. The question is, what sort of growth?

Clearly, the developing world cannot take the old smokestack road to riches. Even this long-suffering Earth could not tolerate everyone in India and China generating as much waste and pollution as the average American (or, indeed, Briton). But there is nothing intrinsically wrong with a world with 6 billion cars and 6 billion fridges. What is essential is that they do not damage the ozone layer and raise carbon monoxide levels. And the same principle applies for human beings. It matters not how many of us there are – but whether we can live in happiness and dignity.

So whose fault is it, Mr Campbell, if the press is obsessed with trivia?

IT WAS during the last general election, and we on the Tony Blair campaign battle bus had reached Stevenage. Or was it Basildon? Whatever: we were inside one of those modern community theatres that usually host bingo, Tai Chi and Eddie Izzard, but whose car park was at this moment home to The Five (colourful Pledges of New Labour) each blown up to gigantic size and mounted on the back of a lorry.

The smiling leader of the opposition was walking through a crowd of strategically placed nurses, school children and victims of youth crime. As he progressed, a very left-wing woman journalist pointed at the tall figure of Alastair Campbell (following his leader eyes darting hither and yon like a Secret Service bodyguard), and confided to me, *sotto voce*, that she would like to rip the press secretary's clothes off and subject him to a strenuous off-the-record briefing.

This was one incident from that morning that sticks in my memory. I don't mention it purely to irritate Alastair with my taste for triviality, but also because it came minutes before he shepherded us into an administrator's office and gave us a well-deserved telling-off. There had been a teeny Labour wobble following questioning about the privatisation of air traffic control, and this was threatening to become a "Story", instead of just a story (the latter lasts a day or so and then fades; the former goes on interminably while everyone examines every word, nuance and dustbin). Campbell reminded us (in sorrow, not anger) of our democratic duty.

Messrs Campbell and Blair are also very worried about Europe. In the Major years, the issue of the EU was hijacked by the Eurosceptic press, whose agenda (though not necessarily their views) was then followed by radio and TV. On Tuesday, Campbell


DAVID AARONOVITCH
Labour has done little to encourage the type of journalism it says it wants to see more of

gave the example of the recent Vienna summit, which was said by the BBC to be "overshadowed" by the issue of tax harmonisation. In reality, he pointed out, it wasn't. But harmonisation had been the great scare run by the Daily Mail et al in the previous fortnight.

One day – soon, probably – Blair knows that he and the bankers Europhobes of The Sun, The Times and the Mail are going to fall out in nuclear fashion. In those circumstances, as they press Portillo redux on a re-nationalising, the PM will need the BBC to be telling its own tale of Europe, not that provided by two-thirds of Fleet Street. And it is essential that he speaks directly to the country.

Campbell is not a silly man. When he accuses the press of being driven by trivia and of an "evasion of the real state of Britain", he knows also that

readers are a problem. I began this article with the lusty woman journalist because I calculated that some of you, who have got this far, may have done so because of her. Nor is this to be deprecated. We all want a tale. As the late Raphael Samuel pointed out in his book, *Theatre of Memory*, the people's history tends to be a series of stories, narratives of gory and disastrous happenings, rather than a statistical analysis.

Nevertheless, the alternatives to pure story creation have been atrophying in recent years. When I first worked on the cerebral (and not overwatched) *Weekend World* programme in the early Eighties, there was a corps of specialist newspaper journalists that one could call upon. There were experts on welfare, health, the law, and transport. There were even local government specialists who understood how councils were financed; now no one does. Campbell is right to stress the importance of encouraging explanation through such specialists.

But he may care to reflect that Labour itself has, for far too long, been riding the back of the tiger. Much Westminster trivia originates with the politicians, and their minions themselves. They habitually trot up and down the press corridors, indulging in name gossip about each other and about the Tories. And it was Tony Banks and Margaret Hodge who really helped to give the despicable anti-Hoddie handwaggon a shove, before the PM's own remarks on *This Morning*. Likewise, the "tough" spin on the asylum and welfare stories in the last couple of days seems to owe

something to a desire to grab Mail and Sun headlines.

And Alastair may also want to ask himself just how much he has done to encourage the journalism he says he wants to see. How has, say, *The Independent* been treated when compared to *The Sun*? Have the serious TV current affairs shows received the co-operation they need? When was I editor of *On the Record*, I waited in vain for nearly two years for the shadow employment secretary to come and explain himself (live and unedited) on my show. His name was Tony Blair.

So are we now going to see more of Gordon on *Newsnight*, more Prezza on *On the Record*, more Prime Minister on *Jonathan Dimbleby*? Will priority be given to specialist journalists asking hard policy questions, rather than to briefing the hacks in the lobby? Can we expect to have constant encouragement for those who seek to facilitate a robust debate, and a little bit less time for those who can't even spell the word "debate"?

Above all, will the Government take us all a bit more into its confidence, and accept the intellectual challenge of discussing rather than spinning its policies? Campbell is right about cynicism in the press, and I can assure him it is nearly as bad among broadcasters. If he is sincere wanting an intelligent discussion, and not just an easy ride (and I believe that he is), then both he and his boss will have to start taking a few more risks, putting it about more. And if he does that, then – just perhaps – even I would be willing to sleep with him.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"This marks an end of a something-for-nothing welfare state."
Tony Blair,
Prime Minister

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The British love permanence more than they love beauty."
Sir Hugh Casson,
British architect

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
International comment on the German government's new policy on citizenship

THE MILLION people who signed the Christian Democrats' petition reject dual nationality as a general rule. They will not accept the Free Democrats model, even if this would allow dual nationality only for a limited period. The change of government in Hesse has made a deep impression on the coalition. Social Democrats already appear to be distancing themselves from their revolutionary Bill. They will not give in completely until they realise that the CDU and the CSU will not waver.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

THIS REFORM is astonishing. But it does conform with a country that is home to a multicultural society; it has had to appease the demands that have arisen from the matter of immigration. Germany has shown that she knows how to be generous: what other western European country has opened

its gates to refugees from ex-Yugoslavia?
Le Monde, France

THERE IS support within the SPD for the Christian Demo-

crat position on dual nationality. The SPD is saddled with a government that has to work with Green demands, rather than genuine Social Democrat issues. Schröder probably

thought that it would be best to deal with Green issues at the beginning of the legislative period; that's when governments are at their strongest. But he cannot have suspected that these issues could cause such rapid and lasting damage.

Die Welt, Germany

EVERY COUNTRY has a right to debate the questions of what constitutes belonging, loyalty and citizenship. It may be better to have the mainstream

conservative opposition raising the issue than to leave it to an extremist fringe, even though racism forms an undeniable current in the stream of opposition. The point, though, is that the Christian Democrats are wrong. Setting limits on immigration is one thing; allowing foreigners to move to your country and then keeping them as second-class citizens is another. That is unjust and in the long run untenable.

The Washington Post, US

PANDORA

DESPITE THE mugging of the former Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, on Clapham Common last October, the open spaces of south London hold no fear for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who regularly goes jogging in Battersea Park. Mr Straw revealed details of his venturesome exercise routine to MPs this week at the Home Affairs Select Committee police recruitment hearing, when he observed that police patrolling required a high level of physical fitness. The committee chairman, Chris Mullin, quipped: "You probably qualify, running round Battersea Park." The Labour MP Martin Linton was sceptical. "I've yet to see you," he said jealously. "I've got witnesses," protested Mr Straw, surely referring to the privately run Wandsworth Borough Parks Police, who have replaced the boys in blue in patrolling the area.

PADDY ASHDOWN, the outgoing Lib Dem leader, has hit upon a cunning wheeze to occupy those who are anxious to fill his shoes. He is devolving many of the huge number of invitations he receives to the leaders-in-waiting. Such invitations include the opening of school fêtes and an offer for Paddy to appear in a pop video. There is now a vast number of Lib Dem MPs who are ready to scrap amongst themselves for crumbs from the captain's timetable. Pandora has found that the list of wannabes runs to a football team. The 11 are: Jackie Ballard; Malcolm Bruce; Menzies Campbell; Don Foster; Nick Harvey; Simon Hughes; Charles Kennedy; David Rendell; Matthew Taylor; Phil Willis; and a late entry from Eastleigh MP David Chidgey, who was "coy" on the leadership bid, according to his local paper.

PROFESSOR ANDREW LINZEN, holder of the world's first academic post in theology and animal welfare, at Mansfield College, Oxford, has had an unwelcome encounter with a dog. Linzey, who outraged Church traditionalists by penning liturgies for animals, was bitten by a resident at Battersea Dogs' Home while filming a programme for the BBC. Nowhere in his book, *Animal Rights*, does it say anything about

prayers for animals who bite others. Has the dog-lover missed a trick? "I think some things are worth discussing but not others," Linzey dryly told Pandora.

PANDORA DID NOT realise that the theory of evolution applied to competitions. The latest issue of Prospect magazine features a piece by Geoffrey Miller, which won the Vivus/Prospect prize of £5,000 for the best essay on sexuality from an evolutionary angle. The judges included Helena Cronin, who runs the Darwin Centre at the LSE. Miller, an evolutionary psychologist at University College London, often lectures at the Darwin Centre. One of the joint runners-up was Oliver Curry, "administrative assistant" at the Darwin Centre. Cronin told Pandora: "I didn't want it to look as if I was pushing Darwinian themes, so I waited to hear what the other judges thought first. I was delighted that Miller and Curry entered the competition and particularly delighted that they won." Pandora supposes this is what is called natural selection.

THE GREAT and the good have all been invited to special showings of the Monet exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. But last Friday, at a gathering for the accountants Ernst Young, one of the sponsors of the exhibition, the gallery was evacuated after a reported water leak. A spokesperson for the Royal Academy told Pandora: "A fault occurred in the control system and the gallery immediately closed. It was reopened the following morning."

The spokesperson was keen to point out that: "It was not so much of a leak as a drip." And in which room did this drip occur? "The Venice room."

TRUE COLOURS, a report published by the Institute of Public Policy Research on racial discrimination, has generated an instant response. In the report, the author and *Independent* columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown argues that the law cannot tackle racism on its own. New Scotland Yard is certainly curious to hear why. It was first to call for a copy.

Pandora can be contacted by e-mail at: pandora@independent.co.uk

HOW, I wonder, will this week's gloomy news from Brussels affect our rent, which is coming up for review any day? I fear the worst. Inner London, according to a new Eurostat survey, is now the richest region in Europe, generating two-and-a-half times more wealth than the EU average. That must include me.

I've lived in Chelsea man and boy - well, two men, three boys and three girls, to be precise - for the better part of 30 years in the same cramped fourth-floor (no lift) flat above a shop that I moved into as a penniless student. There were four of us, a law student called Hugh, an art student called Richard, a young journalist called Hamish (that's Hamish McRae, by the way) and me, and we all paid £5 a week rent.

Don't worry - this isn't going to be one of those down-the-memory-lane exercises with me bemoaning my misty-eyed about the good old days when the King's Road still had a fishmonger, a greengrocer, a pet shop and a spit-and-sawdust pub called The Markham Arms where the Kray brothers drank. I am feeling misty-eyed - The Markham Arms is now a branch of the Abbey National.

I tell you all this to demonstrate that Chelsea, despite its raffish reputation (greatly exaggerated), was once an ordinary place where ordinary people like us could afford to live. When, in the fullness of time, I moved into the master bedroom, having married the law student, the others moved out. This left room for a lodger, a serious young woman called Vera from Düsseldorf, who

sold space for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and ran a nursery. Every five years or so they put the rent up, but not by much - they being a series of increasingly dubious landlords, the last of whom demanded that the rent be paid in used notes or a cheque made out to Lucky Logic Hollings (Isle of Man). The building fell into disrepair. We, being nearest to the roof, became used to the rain dripping, sometimes pouring, through the kitchen ceiling via the electric light fitting, but this was preferable to life in Flat One, which bore the full brunt of the building's archaic plumbing.

There was the memorable evening when Mary Lou, one of the four Pan Am air hostesses who lived in the bottom flat, staggered upstairs too traumatised to speak coherently. They had all been away on long hauls for a week. She was the first one home. "Oh my God - oh my God," burbled Mary Lou. "Come and see." I came. I saw. I blanched. Someon's S-band or P-trap, possibly Flat Two's, had packed up, and a week's worth of sewage from three flats had backed up into Mary Lou's lavatory and was

now seeping menacingly along the corridor towards the kitchen.

We all put up with these minor irritations because we liked living in Chelsea. My second husband said there would be more space in Wimbleton, but you get used to Zone One, and besides, the children were at local schools. And then 10, maybe 15 years ago, everything changed. The first intimation that things were different became apparent when the lights on the stairs were turned off because Lucky Logic had failed to pay the electricity bill and done a runner owing heaven-knows-how-much to the Right Hon Lord Whatif who owned the head lease to the entire block.

Overnight we were modernised. The £2 concrete stairs leading to our front door were carpeted, the walls were painted, the roof was fixed. Most significantly, our security of tenure as tenants was withdrawn. We were no longer in Fair Rent territory, we were in market rent territory, and the market had changed - boy, how it had changed - because Chelsea had changed. There were still families down the road, but if they were in flats they were coun-

cil flats, and if they were in houses, the houses cost upwards of £2m.

Bankers, film stars, drug dealers and wide boys live in Chelsea these days - ordinary families don't. In the Fair Rent days, I kept the pram and the children's bikes in the hall, and hung the washing on our landing to dry. The fire escape ladder was perfect for underwear. Visitors said it looked very Italian. Frank, the 85-year-old ex-bomber pilot downstairs, loved having a family upstairs. Last year Frank died, and his flat became vacant, and Lord Whatif wants £600 a week for it - unfurnished - and yuppie foreign bankers are trudging incredulously up three flights of stairs ("What, no elevator?") to view it. Yesterday, after several warning letters about health, safety and vermin, the bicycles downstairs and the washing, football boots and toy boxes on our landing were seized and impounded in a mews of Sloane Square.

Inner cities, even the richest in Europe, need families. Families need understanding landlords. Besides, a Chelsea flat with Continental ambience and lingerie should fetch more than £800 a week, surely?



SUE ARNOLD
Bankers, film stars, drug dealers and wide boys live in Chelsea these days - ordinary families don't

In Britain, nothing is ever as simple as black and white



YASMIN ALIBHAI-BROWN
When Reggie Kray writes a letter to Mrs Lawrence expressing his shame, it must mean something

I WISH I had become a luscious cooking guru instead of a worthy "race expert", which makes dinner parties (if indeed I am ever invited to them these days) such unsettling occasions. Two questions recur in various forms. Is racism really that much of a problem in this country? Are things getting better on the race front? Yes.

You see, both realities do coexist and cannot cancel each other out. The Lawrence report, the British Crime Survey and piles of other evidence on discrimination hold up mirrors close to our faces so that we can see the blemishes.

There are areas in this country where there is unspeakable despair among black and Asian people. But today, because of the Lawrence inquiry, for the first time since the racist killing of Kelso Cochrane in Notting Hill Gate in London in 1959 - when thousands of white people turned up at the funeral - there is a real willingness to change things. When Reggie Kray writes a letter expressing his shame to Mrs Lawrence, it must mean something. This is what makes the situation in Britain so complex, and why the majority of Britons avoid engaging with it. Many black and Asian people, wounded as they are by racism, would prefer it if there weren't too much distracting talk of progress and harmony. Most white people would just love it if we got out of the habit of moaning when in pain and became more "positive" (God, how that word!)

But even this is simplistic. Tory black and Asian Britons tend to be much more irritated by anti-racists than white people. And there are thousands of white Britons who are committed to fighting racism.

Exactly 20 years ago this spring Blair Peach died for this cause when he was bludgeoned to death by

a specially constructed police baton as he was out demonstrating against the National Front in Southall in London. It has been ever thus. As CLR James, a Trinidadian and one of this country's finest intellectuals and writers, wrote in 1938: "The blacks will know as friends only those who are fighting in the ranks beside them. And whites will be there."

So nothing is as simple as black and white. It never was, and is still less so today when this small island kingdom is grappling with the very essence of nationhood as it comes to terms with devolution, further integration into Europe and the wider implications of globalisation. Against this backdrop, then, we need to become more politically and socially literate. We need to understand our complex, multi-cultural society; to create a more relevant discourse, to tell new stories for what we might be if only we could liberate ourselves from the comforts of old habits and plain beliefs. We should expect more, too, of our leaders, who should have steered the ship better.

Fifty years after the Empire Windrush landed on these shores and four centuries after the first racist utterances about immigration were made by Queen Elizabeth I, right-minded white and black citizens have reason to ask why we have been governed so poorly that young men feel it is patriotic to kill someone just because his skin is of another colour. Why should we tolerate such fissures? Why are we allowing the country to lose out on the talents of bright young black and Asian graduates? No wonder so many of them laugh away the integrationists dreams of their parents.

Last night, BBC TV repeated an experiment first carried out 10 years back, when hidden cameras were used by two intelligent, articulate men - one black and one white - to test whether direct racial discrimination still existed. It was filmed in Leeds. We saw that in some situations the black man got worse treatment than his white colleague, and heard a foul-mouthed taxi driver holding forth on "smelly Asians" and race wars. Unlike those in the last programme, depressingly, these two investigators themselves ended up fighting each other, so wide was the gap between their perceptions.

This brings me to the theme of my new book, *True Colours*, published this week by the Institute for Public Policy Research, where I work part-time. I plug it with an easy conscience because there are no royalties involved, and because doing so is marginally less distasteful than having a good friend promote or review it. Also, as the media itself cannot handle more than a couple of radical thoughts, I am giving you the bin you didn't get. I am suggesting to the Government that it should grasp this challenge and modernise the way race has been dealt with for half a century.

A true image of modern Britain

Andrew Buurman

ries need to be based on need not panic, and race should have nothing to do with it. Look at Silicon Valley. If its Indian computer wizards were to go home, the blossoms would vanish instantly.

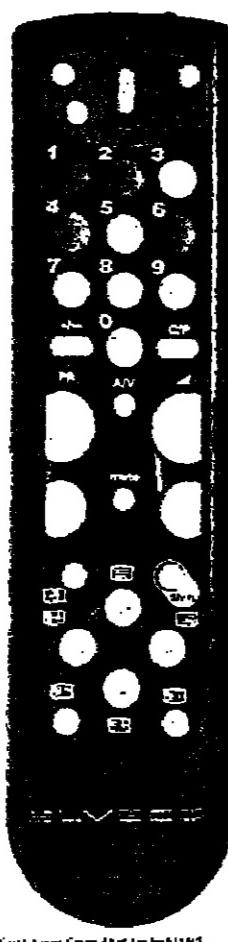
Let the people of this country, black and white, be consulted on issues to do with race and immigration. They never have been, and on this - and only on this - point, Enoch Powell was right. Let us proclaim with pride what we have achieved together. At present, in some ways, real integration has overtaken our understanding of it.

None of this can happen without leadership. As Michael Ignatieff says: "Racial attitudes, since they are an unstable mix of fears and fantasies, are especially susceptible to changes in the public culture. They are not a set of alaristic facts before which all politicians must kneel... racial attitudes can be changed." And if they are not, say goodbye to that cohesive, dynamic society we all wish we had and dream of having in the next millennium.

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The true face of America



MARY DEJEVSKY

If uncomfortable truths come out of Clinton's lying, he may unwittingly have done us a favour

TODAY, TOMORROW, at the very latest Saturday, America's year of laughing-crying agony will end with the acquittal of Bill Clinton on a new-fangled technicality; his poll-rated popularity. Only the second president of the United States to be tried by the Senate will be spared to serve out his term, and by a far wider margin than the single vote that saved his comrade in impeachment, Andrew Johnson, in 1868. Will Presidents' Day - which falls this weekend to commemorate the likes of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and John F Kennedy - ever be the same again?

As the US Senate nears its verdict, the dominant image is of an all-conquering Clinton, striding unscathed through a battlefield strewn with the corpses of his enemies: the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr; two House Republican leaders (one incumbent, one designate); a posse of influential Republicans who turned out to be preaching what they did not practise, and a string of women, among them Linda ("The Snitch") Tripp and "Santa Monica" herself, whose reputations lie in shreds. The arrows rebound off the President to fell his attackers instead.

Already, the United States is drawing conclusions from all this, but they are not necessarily the right ones.

It is taken for granted that Kenneth Starr and his ilk will not ride again. The Independent Counsel Statute, introduced after Watergate to prevent presidents flouting the judicial process, will be allowed to lapse when it comes up for renewal in June. To Clinton supporters, both the office and its holder were at fault. The office, because it seemed to place a member of the judiciary in judgement over the President, a task reserved by the Constitution for Congress. The holder, because Starr was seen as over-zealous, intruding into areas, such as the President's sex life, that Americans regarded as private.

The fact is, though, that there is no real need either to jettison the independent counsel or to criticise Starr. The system functioned as it was intended to. Richard Nixon was on the fast track to removal through the constitutional process



At the end of his Senate trial, one is left to reflect how well suited President Clinton is to today's America

Win McNamee/Reuters

when forced to resign. His dismissal of the special counsel investigating him may have delayed his departure; it did not prevent it.

Similarly, the existence of the independent counsel and Starr's handling of the Lewinsky investigation may have delayed Clinton's survival, but they did not prevent it. The President's fate was left in the hands of the US Congress, where the Constitution said it belonged.

Because Starr's office appears doomed, his handling of the case will also be written off. But the evidence he unearthed and the conclusions he drew were not contested by the White House or by Democratic politicians. Four out of five Americans say they believe that Clinton committed perjury and obstructed justice - the charges in the two Articles of Impeachment against him.

The fact is, though, that there is no real need either to jettison the independent counsel or to criticise Starr. The system functioned as it was intended to. Richard Nixon was on the fast track to removal through the constitutional process

The verdict of Americans is split - guilty but worthy of office - and it will be effectively ratified by the Senate. The contradiction calls into question the other legal change that is likely to follow the trial: the unanimous Supreme Court ruling that a sitting president may be sued in the civil court. That ruling required him to defend the sexual harassment suit brought by Paula Jones. It led directly to the subpoena for Monica Lewinsky, and the rest is about to be history. If challenged in future, the Supreme Court may choose not to argue again that the distinction to a president from such a lawsuit is outweighed by the principle that all citizens have the right to redress through the courts.

Where Clinton is concerned, Americans may accept such a change. But it sacrifices a principle that the US has stood for from its foundation, a principle much cited by the prosecutors in the course of the Senate trial: a president is not a king; no one is above the law.

Forsaking this principle may not precipitate the dire consequences prophesied by the gloomy representative from Illinois, Henry Hyde, who asked whether "an America will survive that is worth fighting for", but it is a moment worth marking. It could make Clinton the last president not to be above the law - largely because Americans decided that he should be. They believed him guilty as charged, but loved him all the same.

For some - mostly on the left - the President's acquittal means that the impeachment process should never have been started, because the offences were "all about

sex". Impeachment has been "defined downwards": henceforward, they argue, it will signify Congressional disapproval and nothing more. For others - mostly on the right - it means that the Senate was too lenient. If Congress will not remove the President for breaking his oath to uphold the law, what president can ever be removed from office, for anything? In their view, it is the presidency that has been "defined downwards" and will never again wield moral authority.

Clinton's impeachment is being blamed for causing this divide and for the descent of politics into party-political warfare. But the divide is nothing new, nor is the incivility, impeachment merely exposed it.

The one institution that is deemed to have survived with its dignity intact is the Senate. But this

is precisely the conclusion that should not be drawn. The Senate was every bit as divided on impeachment as the House, but Senators had the luxury of retreating behind closed doors to hammer out their differences. The Senate was barely criticised for such secrecy. But the truth is, that the institution is badly out of touch with urban America, and that senators are just as adept at ensuring their own survival as any other politicians.

The fiercest condemnation of the Senate's verdict is coming, predictably, from the right, which warns that acquitting Clinton will change America profoundly for the worse. They hold out the prospect of a moral decline in all areas of public life, which will also undermine the US's authority in the world and, above all, harm "our children".

In truth, though, the impeachment trial and its outcome change nothing. They have simply held up a mirror to America, and if Americans do not like what they see, they had better get used to it, because the reflection is true.

There need be no degradation in public life, because it is not now beyond reproach. Power and money talk; people lie under oath; juries are nobbled. The sexual harassment laws will not be compromised by the President's conduct, because they were already compromised. While the prosecution argued that any chief executive or military officer would be out on his ear if he behaved as Clinton did, those in the know say he would not. The number of senior executives and officers removed for such offences is minute, and the more senior the offender, the more likely he is to survive.

To be sure, candidates for the presidency next time around may be asked probing questions about their private lives. But the lesson from Clinton's impeachment is not, as many are warning, that an imperfect past (or even an imperfect present) is a disqualification from office. It is rather that almost any indiscretion is now survivable, even living - especially if no one believed you in the first place.

The US's image abroad will not suffer unduly from Clinton's acquittal, because the world has long been more sceptical of US motives and authority than have Americans themselves. And since when have their children been so innocent? Middle-class parents may have been embarrassed and their children may be the most protected in the world, but they are also among the most precociously knowing.

The overriding message from Clinton's acquittal is not that the US will never be the same again, but that it may be more honest about how it really is. And if some uncomfortable truth-telling comes out of Bill Clinton's lying, he may unwittingly have done his country a favour. Until then, we can only reflect how very well suited Clinton is to today's America - and America to him.

RIGHT OF REPLY

MARTIN BARNES



The director of the Child Poverty Action Group reacts to yesterday's article by Alistair Darling on welfare reform

THE BENEFITS regime is tough already; don't make it tougher. CPAG agrees that for those who want to and are able to work, paid employment is a route out of poverty. But work is not, and should not be made to be, an option for all - there must also be genuine security and dignity for those without paid work. The issue of the adequacy of benefits should be addressed by Alistair Darling, not ignored. Benefits can help prevent poverty, even if the causes are many and complex.

At first glance, many people may see no problem in requiring claimants to attend an interview to discuss work. But there are dangers, not least in the attempt by the Government to act and sound "tough" on claimants. The statement by Tony Blair that Labour's welfare reform will end the "something-for-nothing welfare state" is simplistic and quite frankly offensive. The insensitive language and media spin risk reinforcing negative stereotypes.

There are already many barriers to claiming benefit - the process can be humiliating and degrading. The prospect of means tests, medical examinations and home visits to check domestic arrangements fills many people with dread. Benefit rules themselves are detailed and complicated, with regulations running to hundreds of pages. No one receives benefit unless an official is satisfied that they are entitled to it - there are many hoops to jump through.

The proposal for a new "gateway" interview will work only if it is adequately funded. The Benefits Agency is already saying that it cannot deliver the high-quality service promised in last year's Welfare Green Paper. With compulsion, you can get away with delivering an inferior service. The benefits regime is tough already; don't make it tougher.

Our debt is to Bilbo, not Plato

DAVID GRESS'S book is a staggeringly ambitious attempt to rethink the whole of human history. Patchily brilliant and profoundly perverse, it poses as an intervention in America's "culture wars" but far transcends that parochial context, offering us something much wider, much deeper and much darker.

Gress's aim is to re-examine the history of "the West" and what the idea of a "Western tradition" has meant to its supporters and enemies. The conventional story was, he suggests, an idealised history of continuity, of unfolding freedom and democracy from ancient Greece to the present western European and north Atlantic world. Hence the title - intended to be ironic, though it also borrows from the late Brian Redhead's useful little history of political thought.

This "grand narrative of the West" is all wrong, says Gress. Assuming continuity from the ancient Greeks to modern Natoopolis, historians of ideas have mistakenly ignored everything between. He feels able to dismiss virtually everyone who has pontificated on the idea of the West. From Arnold



THURSDAY BOOK

FROM PLATO TO NATO: THE IDEA OF THE WEST AND ITS OPPONENTS
BY DAVID GRESS.
THE FREE PRESS/SIMON & SCHUSTER, £17.99

Because the conventional story was so inaccurate, it was - Gress goes on - all too easy a target for lefties, feminists, multiculturalists, post-modernists and other villains. By offering a better history, Gress believes he is also providing a stronger defence against such attacks. Yet his depiction of everything he thinks "anti-Western" is a crude and often silly caricature. Environmentalism is merely "the green superstition", invented by devous ex-Marxists. Post-modernism has no other meaning than "to sow further confusion by combining anti-capitalist and anti-modern resentments" into "a barely camouflaged anti-Western ideology".

Perhaps oddest of all, what Gress calls the "anti-Fascist mindset" from the 1930s onwards was a disguise for pro-Sovietism, so that even to use the word "Fascism" reveals one as a Stalinist. This is palpable nonsense. Probably the most influential of all modern theorists of Fascism has been the German Ernst Nolte, an ultra-conservative whose later writings shaded close to apologetics for Hitler.

In an even stranger move, Gress avoids the label "Nazi" because it is a "derogatory acronym". Well, God forbid that anyone should want to be "derogatory" about Hitler's movement, but the abbreviation has been used by almost all historians. Gress is not, of course, some sort of crypto-Nazi himself; he makes the proper noises of support for democracy and disgust at anti-Semitism.

We do, though, get a very peculiar new pantheon of intellectual history



Gress provides us with a hobbit's-eye view of history

here. There are, bluntly, almost no Jews or left-wingers in it (except Marx, as ultra-villain) and no women or non-whites. This is a German intellectual world with ultra-rightists and ex-Nazis such as Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler and Martin Heidegger at its centre, but with no mention at all of Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin or Karl Popper. There's not the slightest hint that figures such as Franz Fanon, WEB DuBois and Rabindranath Tagore might have had something important to say about the idea of the West.

Gress's only comments on non-Western history are (to use his own abusive language) just ignorant clichés about Islam and China. He gestures towards the value of "macro-historical" structural analyses such as those of Jean Baechler and Ernest Gellner, but does not use them. STEPHEN HOWE

Gress is a fellow at the Danish Institute of International Affairs, a Director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, and co-author of a history of West Germany. Another of his past achievements

THURSDAY POEM

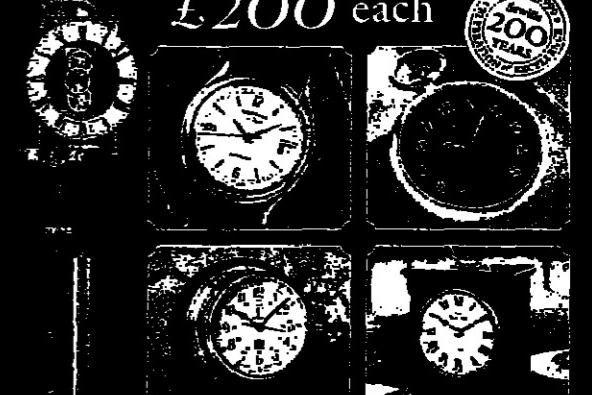
TRIOLET
BY EMILIE PFEIFFER (1827-90)

Warm from the wall she chose a peach,
She took the wasps for councillors;
She said: "such little things can teach";
Warm from the wall she chose a peach;
She waved the fruit within my reach;
Then passed it to a friend of hers: -
Warm from the wall she chose a peach.
She took the wasps for councillors.

Our poems until Friday come from the new paperback edition of 'The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse', edited by Daniel Karlin (Penguin, £10.99)

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Bryan Mosley

AS THE roly-poly shopkeeper and local councillor Alf Roberts, Bryan Mosley contributed much to Coronation Street's success in portraying a sense of community in a Northern backstreet.

He was one of the television serial's longest-serving actors, making occasional appearances during Coronation Street's first decade and becoming a cast regular in 1972. He was last seen in the Street earlier this year, on New Year's Day, when Alf died quietly following a stroke.

The character first appeared as a Post Office colleague of Ken Barlow's father Frank. He went on to win respect in Britain's most famous television street, in Weatherfield, a fictional suburb of Manchester, as a local councillor and as owner of the corner shop, which has always been one of the main centres of social interaction in the programme.

He twice served as Mayor of Weatherfield – in 1973, when the landlady of the Rovers Return, Anne Walker, accepted his invitation to be Lady Mayorette, and in 1994, when one of the pub's barmaids, Betty Williams, took over as First Lady after her wife, Audrey, found the routine of official functions too boring.

Straight-faced Alf was married three times in all. Six years after the death in 1972 of his first wife, Phyllis, who was never seen on screen, he exchanged vows with Renee Bradshaw, who owned the corner shop in Coronation Street, and he took early retirement from his job with the Post Office the following year to help her there. When she died in a car crash in 1980, Alf inherited the shop and ran it until 1994. His only concession to modern times came when he turned the shop into a mini market.

It appeared to be third time lucky in love for Alf in 1985 when he married Audrey Potter, mother of Gail Platt. But, with a reputation for being careful with money, he was unprepared for Audrey's shopping sprees and lack of help with his business. Alf's ultimate penny-pinching measure was taking out "term" life assurance, which ran out only a short time before his death.

Bryan Mosley made Alf one of the most enduring and sympathetic characters in Coronation Street, even though he came from the other side of the Pennines himself. Born in Leeds in 1931, he was brought up in a working-class district of the city. As a child, he modelled for clothes catalogues and made his stage debut at the age of 10 as the back end of a cow in a production of the pantomime *Cinderella*.

Instead of pursuing his childhood ambition to become a missionary, Mosley won a scholarship to Leeds College of Art (1944-46) and then worked as a commercial artist. In an effort to earn more money, he left that job to work in a bookshop and later sold books door-to-door.

Then, while doing National Service in Scotland, with the RAF in Air Traffic Control (1949-51), he started acting at the Byre Theatre, St Andrews. This led him, after demob, to train at Bradford Civic Theatre (1952-54) under Esme Church,



Mosley as Alf Roberts, Coronation Street's roly-poly shopkeeper, with his wife Audrey, played by Sue Nicholls Granada TV

Bubbles (1967). Mosley fenced with Terence Stamp in *Fur from the Madding Crowd* (1967) and fought on a rooftop with Michael Caine in *Get Carter* (1970), which brought a nasty end for his character.

As a fight director, he coached such stars as Robert Hardy and Tom

Roberts in Coronation Street in Episode 18, on 16 February 1961, just two months after Tony Warren's serial began. He continued to appear on and off for the next two years and, as a councillor friend of Len Fairclough, returned as a semi-regular in 1967. Five years later, when the character's wife Phyllis died in the storyline, Alf Roberts became a permanent fixture in the Street.

Alf's contribution to local affairs was honoured with his appointment as OBE in the Queen's 1995 Birthday Honours List. One of the character's most humorous storylines came with the race to get him and his wife, Audrey, to the ceremony at Buckingham Palace on time. Don Brennan threw Audrey out of his minicab on the drive to London following an argument, with the result that Alf asked Betty Williams – waiting outside the Palace – to take his wife's place alongside him. Audrey, not

to miss a chance to mix with dignitaries, never lived this event down. As an actor, Mosley felt that Alf was sometimes regarded as a bit flat. He once told me:

There's a lot in him that's not been explored on screen. There's something of a fighter in Alf. He was in the Army during the war and probably had quite a difficult war. He's still interested in the weapons of the 1940s. All that has been glossed over. Part of the way I play him is that he has this experience behind the staid image. He has been to strip clubs with Ray Langton and Ernest Bishop, and he had a girlfriend called Donna Parker that no one in the street, only viewers, knew.

I don't go along with Alf about a lot of things. I don't spend time in pubs – it's a tremendous waste of time. He has a very limited outlook on travel and is never seen to read. I'm sure he does – probably reads Tolstoy – but it's never been shown.

During the Sixties and early Seventies, Mosley accumulated many other television roles in popular programmes such as *The Plane Makers*, *The Saint*, *Z Cars*, *The Avengers*, *No Hiding Place*, *Emergency – Ward 10* and *Doctor Who*. He played three short-term characters in *Crossroads* (1966-67), a policeman in *A Family at War* (1970) and the landlord of a block of flats in the first two series of the situation comedy *Queenie's Castle* (1970-71).

He also performed alongside Arthur Haynes, Harry Worth and

Dick Emery in their television shows and with Morecambe and Wise in a commercial for the brewers Watney's, as well as using his stunt skills to swing from a huge advertising sword in hand, in an unscripted advertisement for a cereal.

Mosley appeared with the Coronation Street cast in the 1988 Royal Variety Performance and was the subject of *This is Your Life* in 1997. At the 1969 American Television and Radio Commercials Festival he was awarded a Special Performance Citation for an advertisement he appeared in for Albert's Crisps.

In recent years, he was dogged by ill-health, suffering a heart attack in 1987 and respiratory problems 10 years later. These problems were mirrored in heart trouble for Alf on screen and eventually led to the decision to retire him from Coronation Street.

ANTHONY HAYWARD

Bryan Mosley, actor: born Leeds, West Yorkshire 25 August 1931; married 1956 Norma Bowes (three daughters, three sons); died Shropshire, West Yorkshire 9 February 1999.

Bryn M. Jones

BRYN M. JONES was a leading biologist, an accomplished artist, and a man of charm and warm humanity. It was these qualities he brought to the then University College of Wales, Aberystwyth ("Aber") when appointed to lead the Department of Zoology in 1961. His vision and enthusiasm matched the spirit of the now long-lost, post-Robbins age of the 1960s and 1970s. He glimpsed enough of the more troubled days following the first draconian financial cuts in 1981 to retire, he recently reflected, a little late.

His younger days at Edinburgh University convinced him that a relaxed, tolerant and considerate approach to students would maximise their success. Thus he relished the opportunity in "Aber" to transform the rather staid department from its focus on traditional natural history with a few selected Honours students, into a large multi-discipline, vibrant centre with 40 or more third-year students and a well-balanced range of modern courses.

Jones instituted tutorials and an "open door" availability of staff to students. He encouraged get-togethers at his favourite Gregynog University Study Centre, in the Department and, with his wife Irwen, at his Plas Gwyn home. Students were always to be treated with respect and Bryn was especially sympathetic to their crises during examinations.

He was born in Breconshire in 1916 and was educated in Merthyr County School where initially he studied the humanities and fine art in the sixth form before switching to science and taking a Zoology degree from Cardiff in 1939. His outstanding skill at that time as a rugby union centre, captaining Welsh Schools and the British Universities teams, was never fully developed because of the Second World War.

The war took him initially to a reserve occupation making explosives at the Drigg Government Mills in Cumberland, then to the Royal Naval Medical Branch as a Lieutenant. Following specialist training in entomology at Cambridge, Jones went off to India and Ceylon to fight mosquitoes (malaria) and harvest mites (scrub typhus).

He was demobbed to the Anti-Locust Centre in London but his days at Cambridge had whetted his appetite for academic and he took a 25 per cent pay cut to secure a lectureship in Edinburgh. He became a leading figure in entomology and gained his DSc in only four years. In the late 1950s, from his studies on the taming of the hippocampus in insect molting and under the influence of Michael Swann (later BBC Chairman) and Peter Mitchell (Nobel Laureate), he recognised the growing importance of cell biology.

In Aberdeen he rapidly made significant contributions to the study of the role of cell adhesion and movement in vertebrate development. By the 1970s, using novel immunological techniques, his group was making pioneering discoveries on the interaction of the cytoskeleton with the plasma membrane in cell adhesion, a field that is ever expanding to this day.

A talented artist, Jones was influenced by the modern movement of the 1930s and his work was sufficiently large and varied to justify a post-retirement exhibition in the University Gallery. The East was one influence, from his first vivid water-colours of Singhalese fellow seamen from his Navy days, to spiky drawings of the Madras seafarers in the 1980s. In between were other "periods", especially a persistent "microscopic-abstractionist" phase of migrating and adhering cells transformed into abstract patterns, which would then decorate the corridors of the department and whose inspiration he would explain with characteristic hand waves.

RICHARD KEMP

AND RICHARD HINCHLIFFE
Brynn Mor Jones, cell biologist: born Cefn-coed-y-cwmmer, Breconshire 6 November 1916; Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Zoology, Edinburgh University 1947-61; Professor and Head of the Department of Zoology, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth 1961-83; married 1942 Irwen Rowlands (two sons); died Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth 16 January 1999.

Wassily Leontief



His economic system embraces the household sector: the inputs of households are consumer goods and the output is labour supplied to other sectors

were enthralled, as he was a marvellous raconteur.

In 1931, Leontief received an invitation to join the National Bureau of Economic Research in New York. He quarrelled with a member of the faculty – Leontief's quarrels were colourful – and moved within months to the economics department at Harvard. At the beginning, his colleagues were less than enchanted but they soon realised that what was to be his lifelong research on input-output models was innovative and highly relevant.

By 1929, he moved to the US. Leontief had a clear notion of what he wanted to do and of the data required. However, it was only 10 years later during the Second World War that his monograph on the American economy was published.

The economic system it describes embraces the household sector; not as a recipient of consumer goods

produced to satisfy final demand, but as an integral part of the model. Households, Leontief saw, form an additional sector or industry; the inputs of households are consumer goods and the output is labour supplied to other sectors. Investment and savings were similarly incorporated in the system.

If a sector was making a net investment its expenditure exceeded its revenues, while for a sector making net savings revenue exceeded expenditure. A separate saving coefficient was established for each sector, such that total expenditure was equal to total revenue divided by the coefficient. Sectors making a net investment was to have a savings coefficient of less than one (expenditure exceeding revenue).

Sectors making net savings – the household sector for example would have a coefficient in excess of one. During the war, Leontief worked

for the US Treasury under the direction of Henry Morgan Ford Jr and went with him as one of his advisors to the Bretton Woods Hotel in lovely New Hampshire where his boss, along with Maynard Keynes, outlined the economic system of the post-war world.

My first memory of Leontief was when I and other Cambridge undergraduates were told by our supervisor, the late Harry Johnson, to attend a lecture by one of the most innovative economists of the day. It was not just the undergraduates who went. There sat Nicholas Kaldor and Richard Kahn, Dick Stone and Sir Dennis Robertson, Piero Sraffa, Austin Robinson and Joan Robinson. Later in the week, at Robertson's political economy club, the students had the benefit of the glistening conversation between Robertson, some of his colleagues and Leontief!

In 1975, having reached the age of 70, Leontief was invited to the Institute of Economic Research specially created for him by New York University. Here he could work on practical solutions to problems and developing countries. As Amartya Sen, Master of Trinity and himself a Nobel Prizewinner in Economics, put it: "Wassily Leontief was one of the most innovative economists with a deep interest in the real world".

TAM DALYELL

Wassily Leontief, economist: born St Petersburg 5 August 1906; Professor of Economics, Harvard University 1946-53; Henry Lee Professor of Political Economics 1953-75; Nobel Prize in Economic Science 1973; married 1932 Estelle Marks (one daughter); died New York 5 February 1999.

THE COMPANY of economists who met at Adam Smith's graveside in Edinburgh to pay honour to the great man on the bicentenary of his death in 1990 was a remarkable one. From the United States came Franco Modigliani, Laurie Klein and five Nobel prize-winning colleagues. The British contingent was led by the late Sir James Meade, Sir Alan Peacock and Professor Andrew Skinner. Outstanding both in lecture and talk was a bustling, dynamic figure with a great deal to say: this was the irrepressible Wassily Leontief.

On emigrating to the United States in 1931, his interest was narrowly focused on the development and refinement of input-output analysis. He was a promoter of the importance of raw data, which he used to show how the economy is broken into sectors. By systematically recording the flows of goods and services among industries, he explained their inter-relationships. Few doubted that in 1973 he deserved a Nobel prize for pioneering the field of input-output analysis.

Leontief was born in St Petersburg, as it was then, in 1906. His father was a university professor who coached him from the age of three. Wassily was admitted to Leningrad University in 1921 at the age of 15. His early studies were carried out against the background of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the civil war which dominated the years 1918-22, thereafter causing a period of slow economic recovery in Russia.

Leontief said that he was sympathetic to the revolution and described

himself in those days as "a socialist of independent views, which differed from those of the Bolsheviks". It could be no surprise to those who knew him later that he spent some time in prison. He was a natural member of the awkward squad. In 1925, after a chest infection which nearly killed him, he left Russia for Berlin, taking advantage of family connections.

Once there he worked with the economic historian Werner Sombart, later the author of a best-selling book, *Why There is No Socialism in the United States* (1976). He also worked with the statistician Ladislaus Bortkiewicz. This relationship was crucial to his later development and to the paramount importance he gave to statistics. Bortkiewicz had also published in 1907 an early solution to the so-called "transformation problem in Marxian economics".

His time in Berlin instilled in Leontief a healthy scepticism of communism. In 1927, he moved to the Institute of World Economics at Kiel, a period to which he attached enormous significance as he did some work on demand and supply.

There in 1929, a chance conversation in a cafe with a party of Chinese visitors led to an offer of employment as advisor to the Minister of Railways in China. Leontief spent a fascinating year in southern China planning the railway network. This required him to travel throughout the country collecting data in Edinburgh, he described his return to China 10 years later; his earlier experience gave him a wonderful capacity to compare old China and Mao's China. His heroes

were enthralled, as he was a marvellous raconteur.

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THORA CRAIG'S long life was dedicated to the relief of suffering and the promotion of principles that predate many of today's more selfish imperatives. It was a life that changed the nursing profession to a remarkable degree.

She was born in 1910, the daughter of George Silverthorne, a South Wales miner and a founder member of the British Communist Party. Her faith in the virtues of co-operation and comradeship remained rooted in the values of the coalfield.

She trained as a State Registered Nurse and in 1938 joined the Inter-

national Brigade in Spain. She pioneered new ways of treating battlefield wounds, often working in dangerous circumstances. The courage of the republican forces inevitably led to heavy casualties. Hundreds a day were treated and Craig's comrades in uniform voted to promote her to matron. Ever after she was an honoured guest at veterans' reunions, unveiling memorials.

The culture of the College of Nursing – the forerunner of the Royal College of Nursing – precluded membership of a trade union. Appalled at the way nurses were being coerced into working longer hours for less pay, with a handful of colleagues Craig set up the Association of Nurses, the first trade union for hospital staff, in 1938. Small in number but unconventionally outspoken, the association was subjected to fierce criticism in the professional press.

But nurses recognised the strength of Thora Craig's arguments for better pay and conditions – and hence improved patient care – and took to the streets wearing masks to hide their identity from hospital administrators. They signed up in droves and Craig later led her association into the National Union of Public Employees, now subsumed into Unison. As Secretary of the Socialist Medical Association she was a leader of a delegation that met Clement Attlee to discuss the establishment of the National Health Service by the 1945 Labour government.

Thora enjoyed a long and happy marriage to Nares Craig, a radical architect and fellow Communist. Their efforts to support those in trouble were unremitting. In 1968 their daughter Lucy was one of the Guildford Art School students sitting in protest at the quality of education

being offered by Surrey County Council, then dominated by City men and retired senior army officers. Thora and Nares threw their considerable intellectual and practical weight behind the students and the seven lecturers sacked for supporting them, three years later the lecturers won reinstatement.

Craig's experiences in the Spanish Civil War maintained an influence throughout her life. One sunny autumn day in 1992 when she was in Cardiff for the unveiling of a simple memorial to the men of

Bryn
Jones

Ruby Mercer

RUBY MERCER, American-born, Canadian by adoption, had two quite distinct careers. In her youth she trained as a music teacher; then became a singer and appeared successfully as a soprano at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, on Broadway and in opera houses and concert halls across America. She spent a year under contract to MGM in Hollywood, though she never actually appeared before the cameras. She also broadcast frequently, and became a radio personality, hosting 13 shows each week, including the popular *Mr and Mrs Opera* on WNYC.

After her marriage to a Canadian businessman, Mercer moved to Toronto, where she founded, and for 30 years edited, the quarterly magazine *Opera Canada*. She also founded the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus and wrote two excellent biographies of Canadian singers: *The Tenor of his Time* (1976), a life of Edward Johnson, the Toronto-born tenor who was manager of the Metropolitan Opera from 1935 to 1950; and *The Quilicos* (1991), about the baritone Louis Quilico, his wife Edna, a pianist, and his son Gino, also a baritone.

Ruby Mercer was born in Athens, Ohio, in 1906. A foundling, she was brought up in the house of a choirmaster, where music and singing were part of everyday life. After training as a music teacher at Ohio University, she took a job in Honolulu, but did not stay there long as a visiting singer from England heard her sing and recommended that she became a professional.

Mercer enrolled at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, and after graduating obtained a scholarship to the Juilliard School in New York. While singing Zerbinetta in a student performance of Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, she was heard by Edward Johnson, who had just become manager of the Metropolitan, and who arranged an audition for her.

Having made her professional débüt as Nannetta in *Falstaff* at Philadelphia, Mercer made her Metropolitan débüt on 6 June 1936 as Nedda in *Pagliacci*, obtaining excellent reviews. The following season she sang Marguerite in *Gounod's Faust*, and prepared Violetta in *La Traviata*, though she never got to sing the role as the opera house closed owing to a heat wave.

Ruby Mercer was a very handsome woman as well as a fine singer with a beautiful voice, and in 1937 she was tempted to Hollywood by MGM; but no parts were forthcoming, and it

turned out that the studio was merely using her to force Jeanette MacDonald to renew her contract at a more reasonable salary.

Returning to New York, she sang at Radio City Music Hall, and in 1940 appeared at the New York World Fair in *The Gay New Orleans Revue*. She also sang in three shows on Broadway, including in 1941 Offenbach's *La Vie parisienne*. Throughout the 1940s she toured the North American continent in opera, operetta and musical, appearing in such shows as Sigmund Romberg's *New Moon* and Oscar Straus's *The Chocolate Soldier*, as well as *La Bohème* and *Die Fledermaus*. Her career on radio also flourished. When in 1958 she married Geza Pusz, a Hungarian-born businessman from Toronto, the second, Canadian half of her life began.

She found little opera in Canada, and even worse, little awareness of opera, so she set about changing matters as quickly as possible

Ruby Mercer found little opera in Canada, and even worse, little awareness of opera, so she set about changing matters as quickly as possible, envisaging a magazine on the lines of *Opera News* in New York. The first number of *Opera Canada* was published in spring 1969. At first limited to reviews on opera performances in Canada, and to news about Canadian singers at home and abroad, it grew steadily in size and scope, including a section of opera reviews world-wide. I became the UK correspondent in 1973, but did not meet Mercer face-to-face until 1983. By then, through countless letters and phone calls, we had become firm friends. She was a most stimulating companion; she had been everywhere, she knew everybody in the opera world.

An intrepid traveller, who made expeditions to Africa, South America, China and such faraway places, Mercer continued to broadcast frequently in Toronto, on CBC and CFMX.



Mercer broadcasting a radio review programme in the mid-Fifties

planned many summer trips to European festivals, but she was accident-prone, and these trips did not always materialise. Once she was badly burned in Kenya when she stepped in a hidden fire-pit. She did come to Europe in 1989, visiting London, Glyndebourne, Vienna, Bayreuth and Salzburg, as well as Budapest, in order to visit her husband's relations. She revisited Hawaii, where she got the idea for the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus, founded in 1968 with 40 children, a number that has now grown to 160.

On another trip to Hawaii she met the composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who had appeared on her radio show *Mr and Mrs Opera*, and commissioned him to write a children's opera for the CCOC. The result, *Chip and his Dog*, was performed at the Guelph Spring Festival in 1979.

She continued to broadcast frequently in Toronto, on CBC and CFMX.

She even made a stage appearance as Princess Bozena in Kalman's *Cousin Maritzu* at Toronto Operetta Theatre in 1986. Meanwhile honours and awards rolled in: in 1983 the Canadian Music Council Medal; in 1986 the Governor of Ohio's Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts; in 1988 a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Toronto Arts Awards; and many more. In 1990, at the age of 84 and exactly 30 years after founding *Opera Canada*, Ruby Mercer retired as editor. She became a Canadian citizen the following year, and in 1995 was named a Member of the Order of Canada.

ELIZABETH FORBES

Ruby Mercer, singer, broadcaster and magazine editor: born Athens, Ohio 26 July 1906; OC 1985; married 1958 Geza Pusz (deceased); died Toronto, Ontario 26 January 1999.

WHEN HE looked back on the Second World War what struck Jean-Paul Sartre most was the gulf separating the British and the French experience: the past "which fills London with pride was, for Paris, marked with shame and despair".

Fifty years on, any British account of the Occupation still has to begin by accepting that the ordeal of being occupied is as alien to us as is almost unimaginable. It is not for us to make easy judgments. The French themselves have long since abandoned the consolations and evasions they embraced immediately after the event. Since the indictments of René Bousquet, Paul Touvier and Maurice Papon, few people can believe in the old myth of a nation of résistants.

Even so, resistance was slow in coming – strikingly so, if we compare France's record with what happened in Greece or Yugoslavia. It was 14 months before the first German soldier was killed by résistants. For the French to turn against their occupiers, they needed long disillusionment and new hope. The food shortage combined with increasing German brutality to create disillusionment. Hope came first from Britain's continued survival and then, more emphatically, from the setbacks met by the previously unstoppable Wehrmacht in its invasion of Russia.

After resistance had ceased being an "absurd refusal" and become a matter of backing the likely winners,

the speed and completeness of the German victory in June 1940 left the French in deep shock. If France could fall so easily, surely Britain would be next? Realism counselled that France come to terms with the New European Order imposed by the Nazis. In this spirit people turned to Pétain's Vichy government, reassured by the Marshal's record in the First World War but nourished also by the self-abasing impulse of the defeated to criticise not the victors but themselves.

Communists, Jews, Freemasons, trade unionists fell victim to a regime that marched in step with German witch-hunting and sometimes even

went ahead of it. Vichy landed up doing the Germans' dirty work for them.

Even so, resistance was slow in coming – strikingly so, if we compare France's record with what happened in Greece or Yugoslavia. It was 14 months before the first German soldier was killed by résistants. For the French to turn against their occupiers, they needed long disillusionment and new hope. The food shortage combined with increasing German brutality to create disillusionment. Hope came first from Britain's continued survival and then, more emphatically, from the setbacks met by the previously unstoppable Wehrmacht in its invasion of Russia.

After resistance had ceased being an "absurd refusal" and become a matter of backing the likely winners,

the speed and completeness of the German victory in June 1940 left the French in deep shock. If France could fall so easily, surely Britain would be next? Realism counselled that France come to terms with the New European Order imposed by the Nazis. In this spirit people turned to Pétain's Vichy government, reassured by the Marshal's record in the First World War but nourished also by the self-abasing impulse of the defeated to criticise not the victors but themselves.

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Must I be a slave to a beeper?

Valerie, an experienced freelance on contract, has been offered a beeper by her bosses so that they can contact her when they want to. She has a phobia about using it. Nor does she want a mobile phone ringing all the time. Does anyone else feel the same way?

VIRGINIA'S ADVICE

If a quick check among my friends is anything to go by, beepers are extremely unpopular. They go off with a piercing ring, and then you have to access a message from your office which usually demands your reply as soon as possible.

If you're not near a telephone at the time, this can send your blood pressure soaring. I was once on holiday with someone who had a beeper. Just as we were walking across the moors in Scotland, the blessed thing went off. We had to curtail our walk and hurry to the nearest phone, only to find that it was some piddling message from a secretary asking whether my friend had an address that she wanted.

Apparently, if you're worried about a beeper going off in a quiet place you can put it on "vibrate", which means that in the middle of the theatre, or whenever you happen to be wearing it, it can suddenly wiggle violently against you. Personally I'd find this as unacceptable as having the man next to me at the movies moving his knee close to mine and rubbing it along my thigh.

Anyway, Valerie says she doesn't want to have to wear this thing all the time. Presumably she has some kind of clothes sense, and, unlike a lot of men, who adore being weighed down

by gadgets and heavy key rings, she values the line of her dress or the cut of her skirt and doesn't want it spoilt by a horrible bit of black plastic.

Everyone I asked about beepers winced, and they all gave the same simile. "It's like being one of those tagged prisoners," they said. "You can't go anywhere without someone being able to get at you." If Valerie isn't a member of staff, I can't see why she should have to wear one, if she fulfills her contract in every way without one.

Today life is highly invasive, with unwanted faxes, unsolicited e-mails, junk mail, pizza offers through the letter-box, cold calls, and unwanted callers at the door. If you work in an office, the telephone is manned first by a switchboard and then, probably, by a department secretary. Working on your own, you have no defence, no castle walls. I have got the point myself when, at home, I keep my answering machine on permanently. I screen every call and answer them only when I care to. Everyone else I ring back at my leisure.

I think Valerie should buy herself a mobile (not let the office buy it; then she'll be beholden). She could keep it switched off when she's with other people. I'm appalled at the number of people I meet who, in the middle of a meal, suddenly reach into their ringing handbags and conduct

long conversations with invisible people in front of me.)

She could also turn the mobile off when driving, if she were worried that the ringing would distract her.

But it sounds to me as though she never wants to be contacted out of the blue. So I suggest that she buy a mobile, but keep the number to herself and never turn it on except to access messages hourly from her home answering machine. That way, she's entirely in control of the situation.

If she tells her office, in uncertain terms, that this is how she operates, they may gulp a bit, but it's unlikely that they'll push the issue. And Valerie will feel that she's in charge.

And soon she may realise that a mobile phone need not always be a tyrant. It can also be a slave.



DILEMMAS WITH VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Don't let it rule your life
No, you're not phobic, just sensible. In your place I would feel exactly the same, but then, BT's Friends and Family winds me up so much that I'm thinking of leaving the scheme.

If all else fails, Valerie, put it on "vibrate" and relax.

CM London

I know just how Valerie feels. As a junior doctor I totally sympathise with your correspondent over her beeper. When I started the job nearly four years ago I received my beeper and a rota of one night in four on call. I am a poor sleeper anyway, but although I was in no way superstitious (I even walked under a ladder on the day of my driving test), I believed that as soon as I turned the light off, someone would be sure to call, and so I spent several months sleeping with the light on. But it does get much easier. And while it is nice, just occasionally, to fantasise about throwing the beeper against the wall, I know only one person who really has dropped it down the toilet.

CAT THOMPSON

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia,
My brother was a talented artist but he never made a name for himself because he refused to sell any paintings. Before he died a year ago, I promised him that his talents would not go to waste; I would bring his pictures to a wide audience as possible.

The problem is that there are more than 300 canvases, mainly abstracts, which aren't fashionable. Many are huge, therefore less saleable. And no one has heard of him. Storing them costs £4,000 a year. With difficulty, I have managed to sell about six at auction. I lie in bed tossing and turning with guilt that I'm unable to fulfil my promise. Do you have any ideas about what to do with these pictures? I just cannot throw them away.

Yours sincerely, Angie

Anyone who has advice quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora. Send letters and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, "The Independent", 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, fax 0171-293 2122, or e-mail dilemmas@independent.co.uk - giving a postal address for the bouquet.

POETIC LICENCE

BOB'S SMART CAR

BY MARTIN NEWELL

A leading transport expert, Professor Chris Wright, says that microprocessor devices installed in cars of the future may also act as policemen by keeping records of bad driving, fining us or, in extreme cases, even arresting us by locking us in our cars.



Good morning Bob
Your Ford Futura speaking
Monday/Feb-thirteen/ Year 2010
Gremlin-tracker
Can't pin down that squeaking
Recommence clear boot out now and then

Exit seventeen you want?
You missed it.
Contraflow and tailback up ahead
Soothing sounds on system
Temper temper!
Bear in mind what Robomedic said

I'm sorry Bob
But "Dickhead" isn't proper
Fined 100 euro. Insult noted.
No use to dispute it Bob.
I word-searched.
Digi-dictionary has it quoted

Light was amber Bob.
Don't argue with me.
Jumping traffic lights endangers life.
Incidentally Bob.
Last weekend's "conference"
Female colleague was she? Not your wife

Not the smartest move Bob,
Really. Was it?
Driving while "distracted". An offence.
Had to shut you down Bob
It's illegal.
Video recorded evidence

Mandatory, Bob
They're standard features.
Steering-lock and seat-clamps all release.
After flashing lights
And pulsing hooter
Signal the attention of the police

Put it this way Bob
You're only forty
May remarry, find a job some day.
Sorry Bob, your phrase
Can't be computed.
Nearest substitute is: "Go away."



Formal dress is required at the Freemasons' conferences

So you want to be a Freemason

We know about the secret handshakes and aprons.

But what do Masons actually do? By Chris Arnott

The heavy door through which I am ushered is marked "Strictly private". I had expected nothing less from one of the inner sanctums of Manchester's vastly imposing Freemasons' Hall. Yes, the Masons have become more open and media-friendly. Yes, one of the 131 lodges based here was the first in the country to advertise for members in the local paper. But they're still Masons, after all. Privacy goes with the territory.

"We're not a secret society or a society with secrets, but we are a private society," says Alan Garnett, 52, provincial secretary for East Lancashire, who greets me on the other side of the door with a warm grasp of the hand.

I'm testing his grip for the probing thumb or the crooked little finger. But as I have never been initiated into the rituals of the Masonic handshake, what I'm feeling for is not immediately apparent. A surreptitious downward glance confirms that the bottom half of Mr Garnett's immaculate dark suit is firmly in touch with his shoes.

"I've rolled up my trouser bottoms three times in 30 years," he confides.

On each occasion he was passing through one of the initiation ceremonies on the way up the Masonic hierarchy, from apprentice to craftsman to master Mason. The ranks, like many of the symbols of Freemasonry, are based on the guilds of medieval stone masons. Hence the requirement to make oaths of allegiance "on bare and beaded knee" (medieval masons wore breeches). Hence the blood-thirsty threat, abandoned as recently as 1886, that anybody transgressing those vows would have his throat cut, his tongue removed and his bowels fed to the birds. And hence the handshake. It enabled a master to know at first greeting whether an itinerant mason had served an apprenticeship.

"We use it only on ceremonial occasions and when visiting other lodges," Mr Garnett assures me. "I shook hands with someone in the street the other day and my wife asked if he was a Mason. I told her honestly that I didn't know."

Wives and Freemasonry rarely mix, but they are invited to social occasions such as the annual ladies' evening.

Women are employed in the Freemasons' Hall as receptionists, waitresses and bar workers. But to be a member of one of the 7,800-plus lodges in the British Isles, you have to be male. Masons tend to go to monthly lodge meetings straight from work wearing suit, collar and tie. They usually carry with them a little case. Each contains an apron to tether around their woolen-worsted girdles. The plain leather version worn by the medieval stone mason has evolved into something altogether more ornate. Mr Garnett snaps open his own case to reveal a lambswool number fringed with turquoise plastic, decorated with Masonic symbols and enhanced by two rows of metallic tassels.

Two other Masons are sitting around the table in the provincial secretary's office. One is Barrington ("I only answer to Barry") Wallwork, a retired motor trader from Stockport

'We are not a secret society, but we are a private society'

The other is Norman Pickles, a retired sub-editor from the *Daily Mirror*'s Manchester office who is now East Lancashire's press and public relations officer. A sign of the times. Press and public were kept at arm's length until the mid-Nineties, when a more open policy was decreed by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Unfortunately for the Masons, it didn't stop the steady stream of negative publicity. Last March, the Grand Lodge was forced to hand over to the Commons Home Affairs Committee the names of 16 members who were alleged to have been involved in a series of police corruption scandals. Four months later, the Lord Chancellor sent letters to 5,000 judges and tribunal chairmen asking them to disclose any links with Freemasonry. Only 4 per cent admitted to membership (although it was later revealed that the figure for male JPs was at least 14 per cent).

The suspicion, though, of a society of mutual back-scratching

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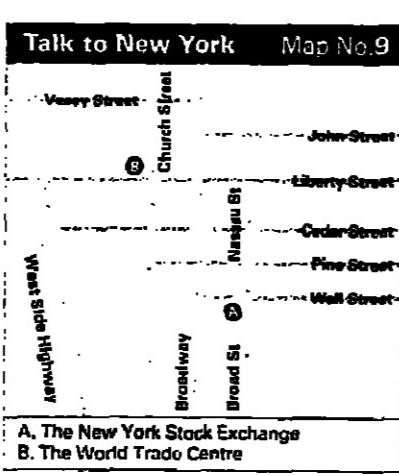
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THE INDEPENDENT

eeper?

SUGGESTIONS

Trust her, it's important

Who needs hype? Barbara Kingsolver's novels become best-sellers by the back door. By Judith Palmer

Maybe because I'm a working mother, I am well aware you have got plenty else to do than read this book. Maybe it's Southern modesty, but I really wouldn't bother you if this weren't important," breathes Barbara Kingsolver, resting an index finger lightly on her new novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*. "That's how I come to my readers: 'I won't bother you, unless it's important. Trust me, it is.' That's how I was raised. I was raised polite."

Over 10 years and eight books, Barbara Kingsolver has very modestly, very politely, built herself the kind of reputation which writers don't go in for much nowadays - steadily accrued by word-of-mouth personal recommendation from one reader to another. No shouting her head in public. No posing naked behind a pile of her own oeuvre. Just one book after another, passionately written and passionately read.

I'd certainly never heard of Barbara Kingsolver when a friend frog-marched me into a bookshop in 1989 and insisted that I read her first novel, *The Bean Trees*. It's a vivid memory because, before or since, I've never had a book pressed into my hand with the same degree of joyous evangelical urgency.

"Everyone says that," Kingsolver laughs. "It's always 'My mother, my sister, my friend, made me read you.' I didn't come to best-seller status through the front door, more through the basement."

It's been a slow climb for Kingsolver; but all that woman-to-woman enthusiasm has suddenly achieved critical mass. This week *The Poisonwood Bible* is sitting at number two in the American best-seller lists, having sold 40,000 copies in its first month of publication. The 43-year-old writer is incredulous.

"A challenging book like this, up there with Tom Wolfe?" she shakes her head. "I still can't believe it. Epidemiologically, my books have been read by women because that's where they were introduced and how they spread," she notes, revealing a hint of her earlier career as a biological scientist, "but now about a third of my mail comes from men."

Maybe the men feel reassured, now she's on an official list, I suggest. "I suppose it has a legitimacy," she nods. "It's not just that underground girlie thing."

Kingsolver, who was born in a small town in rural Kentucky, has now lived for 20 years in the scrubby desert country around Tucson, not far from the Mexican border, where wild, woolly peccaries and road-runners roost all day around the mesquite woods outside her cabin. Both landscapes have stamped themselves hard into the distinctive heart of her fiction.

Underpinned by a commanding political conscience, a belief in the ties of community, and a rapturous sense of wonder in the natural world, Kingsolver's stories chart the lives of witty, courageous women coping as best they can with calamity. *Animal Dreams* pits personal family losses against the encroaching threat of an environmental disaster and the broader background conflict in Nicaragua. *The Bean Trees* sends an adventurous young woman scuttling away from her hometown in a VW Beetle, determined not to end her



'Up there with Tom Wolfe?' Barbara Kingsolver shakes her head. 'I still can't believe it'

Nicola Kurtz

days barefoot and pregnant, hog-tied to a future as a tobacco farmer's wife - yet a couple of hours out of town the car's trashed and she's found herself the custodian of an abused Cherokee baby.

"The people I write about are always in a pickle," she admits. "I don't write about women with easy lives, because I don't write science fiction, you know? My books are about survival rather than manners. Where I grew up, that's what occupied people. My writing has always been about my passions. Most writers tell me they begin with incident or character. My point of origin is always theme. I'm not just putting pretty words together for the fun of it. How could I justify that?"

Kingsolver inherited her humanitarian concerns from her parents, who, she recalls, "set me early on a path of exploring the great, shifting terrain between righteousness and what's right".

In the middle Sixties, when Barbara was about seven years old, they took her with them to central Africa, where they spent a six-month stint as public health workers in an isolated village in the bush. The experience has resurfaced in her profoundly ambitious new novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*.

Following an ill-prepared family of American Baptist missionaries deep into the rank malarial jungles of the Belgian Congo in 1959, just as the country staggered towards independence, *The Poisonwood Bible* is a tenderly comic, but harrowing, tale of family and national catastrophe. Bearing Betty Crocker cake

of the Kikongo language, he continues to thump out the message "Jesus is beloved", as "Jesus is poisonwood", a venomous local tree with sap that burns savagely, suppurating wefts into human flesh.

The whole book is about a legacy of misunderstanding born out of this combination of absolute faith and arrogance," Kingsolver explains. "We all have it in us to think we are right, blundering along, in our way of seeing things."

A wondrously compelling narrative,

The Poisonwood Bible slowly reveals CIA interference in Africa, specifically the assassination of the Congolese leader Patrick Lumumba, and the CIA's role in Mobutu's repressive puppet government.

"I wanted to tackle this issue of the post-colonial world and where we stand in it," says Kingsolver. "Of course, this is a whole tradition of literature in your country, but in the States we're just beginning to look at our culpability."

The defining moment for Kingsolver came in her twenties, when she first pitched up in the south-western states and found herself forced to confront American foreign policy head on.

"Here were people fleeing wars in

places such as El Salvador, created by my tax dollars, yet they weren't even allowed to cross the border to flee the death I was helping to pay for," she whispers, in a warm, soft voice that burns with big-sisterly compassion.

"Like Orieanna and the girls, we didn't make it happen, we were the captive witnesses. But this was done in our name: now what? How do we incorporate it into our own stories and make something of it we can carry forward?"

"We seem to be living in the age of anaesthesia," Kingsolver remarks in her collection of essays *High Tide in Tucson*. "Confronted with the knowledge of dozens of apparently random disasters each day, what can a human heart do but slam its doors? We didn't evolve to cope with tragedy on a global scale. Our defence is to pretend there's no thread of event that connects us, and that those lives are somehow not precious and real like our own." The antidote to apathy, Kingsolver believes, is fiction. "A novel can make us weep over the same events that might hardly give us pause if we read them in a newspaper."

"The Poisonwood Bible", Faber, £10.99

Sung for laughs

MUSICAL COMEDY

FASCINATING AIDA
THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET
LONDON

LIKE MILITARY intelligence, musical comedy can be one of those great oxymorons. There is a preternaturally high risk of wince-inducing embarrassment whenever a comic performer is in the same room as a piano. As evidence, I need mention only two words: "Richard" and "Stiggoe".

So it is the credit of the musical comedy trio, Fascinating Aida, that, far from wincing, their first-night audience at the Theatre Royal Haymarket on Tuesday was laughing heartily. The threesome - Dilise Keane, Adele Anderson and Issy van Randwyk - have long been adept at absurd juxtapositions. Dressed up like glamorous guests at a cocktail party thrown by Noel Coward, they effortlessly slip ignoble thoughts about, say, Richard Gere and gerbils into a perfectly executed piece of three-part harmony. They use a sweet form to deliver incongruously bitter content: many of their most upbeat songs are about disappointment and failure.

Their other skill lies in smoothly changing gear. Early on in their show, *Barefaced Chic*, they segued from "Best Seller", a romping ditty about Aga sagas ("Where women learn to be assertive, / And there's lots of knobbing, but it's always furtive"), into a plaintive medley of songs about broken hearts.

Undoubtedly, Fascinating Aida are slick. The first half of the show, which is directed by Clarke Peters on an awfully day from Chicago, neatly employs the conceit that the trio are backstage warming up and being chivvied by a stage-hand to get a move on. More than once during the evening, clever slips into clever-clever - I have to confess that their song about genetically modified food lost me.

Just occasionally, Fascinating Aida also teeter on the brink of being hackneyed, singing ditties that reminded me of the "humorous" musical section in *That's Life*. Songs about subjects such as Monica Lewinsky, Bill Clinton and Viagra are going to win originality awards only from people just returning from a two-year trek to the North Pole.

For all that, Fascinating Aida remain a sparkling act to look at and listen to. In one song, "Mr Springer", they dressed up as trailer trash and had a girl-gang fight as they sang about their problems: "Oh, Mr Springer, my mum was my dad till a month ago."

And you have to warm to any act that can insert the following tasteless, topical couplet into a song about taboos: "Telling Basil Hume he talks a load of twaddle, / Going in a wheelchair to meet Glenn Hoddle."

JAMES RAMPTON

Fascinating Aida continues at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, London (0171-930 8800) until 6 March. Then touring nationally

Gods and monsters, we've got 'em

THEATRE

THE TEMPEST
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LEEDS

that it encourages you to notice sly connections and contrasts between the plays. McKellen, for example, has just finished portraying Garry Essendine, that arch control freak and Noel Coward's alter ego in *Present Laughter*. This succession of roles alerts you to just how much of a control freak the magician Prospero is.

Glamour-wise, McKellen's Prospero is at the opposite end of the scale from the silk-dressing-gowned Garry. In his tall cardigan, battered straw hat and bare white shins, he resembles a day-tripper to Bognor who has fallen on hard times. But then, with its filthy

underfoot sheeting and dangling swags of iron chains, the enchanted island is here reimagined as a bleakly derelict correctional institute. As he enters, McKellen adds another chalk mark to the wall, as though counting off the days of his exile.

In an exquisitely calibrated, low-key performance he conveys to perfection the struggle in Prospero between manipulative rage at his shipwrecked enemies and an uneasy underlying conviction that the original wrongs done to him may have been partly his fault. Even at the zenith of his power, he delivers the rousing "We elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes..." speech in the touching, disarrayed tones of a headmaster who has privately handed in his resignation but needs to keep up appearances at assembly.

If the emotions in this pro-

duction are real, most of the décor is pure plastic: such sheeting creates, among other things, wigwams for the spirits in the celestial masque and the huge wings that tumble like a cataract from the lofty Ariel when he confronts the men of sin. The casting of actresses as these latter does not work: their scenes come over too much like a bunch fancy-dress party. Consequently, the crucial episode where the primary usurpation is so nearly re-enacted goes for little, and the performers playing Stephano and Trinculo lack the comic presence to sell the slapstick routines. But the rest of the production exerts a potent, if studiously uncharming, spell.

PAUL TAYLOR

A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper



Claudio Blakley and Ian McKellen in 'The Tempest'

The model of an English burlesque

MUSICAL

THE KISSING DANCE
NATIONAL YOUTH
MUSIC THEATRE
LONDON

a late-20th-century tone. It's all in the word play. Goldsmith would, I fancy, have applauded Hart's dexterity and been more than happy to have him put words into his mouth. Hart and Goodall's "song strategy" is on the button: sometimes, their musical interjections take the form of quasi-recitatives - tantalising tasters, promise as

yet unfulfilled; but mostly they are fully fledged "numbers", illuminating key intrigues and forwarding plot with Goldsmithian panache. There's a particularly fine example when Marlow and Hastings stop at the Fur and Feathers to ask directions to Nonesuch House. Tony Lumpkin's incomprehensible rewriting of the Ordnance Survey puts the spin on the entire evening. As Lumpkin later reminds us: "It's been up and down like a harlot's gown". That's Hart. Could Goldsmith have done better? Then there's Goodall's

music, its Englishness inbred in a way that has nothing to do with pastiche and can be defined only by its own very sweet, quirky, very distinctive character. The title number is a case in point - a shadowy little idyll of a tune, insidiously memorable. Goodall's love of polyphony (the English choral tradition) makes for some smashing ensembles, while his instrumentation cleverly hints at period and local colour: a piano accordion pointing up the inheritance of street music, a solo trumpet lending both melancholy and a blast of the

tally-ho's to his racy Act 1 finale, the "hunt" for Lady Hardcastle's jewels. There's a future for this piece, no question, but for now we have NYMT and the vision of directors Russell Labey and Jeremy James Taylor to thank for its first outing. If you're talent-spotting, you don't have to look far. On Tuesday night, initial nervousness made for inhibition and a sense of the house being underplayed. For a while the show was under starter's orders. But not for long. Ian Virgo's engaging Tony Lumpkin was banking

on a photo-finish from the off: Akoya Henry's Constance took a feverish turn on the virginal; Alexander Hassell amusingly caught Marlow's breakdown of co-ordination when confronted with girls "of his own station"; Michael Jibson was affecting as Hastings; and Simon Thomas, as his servant Stingo, upstaged even his funny hat. Funny, too, was Jess Brooks' Mrs Hardcastle, while Neil Clegg's glowering Dick Hardcastle was always going to fall victim to some Stoppardian name-play. "Small, Dick?" Naturally. EDWARD SECKERSON

THE INDEPENDENT

Proudly support a D&AD President's Lecture.

Julien Temple

1999

The director of the cult movies *Absolute Beginners* and *Earth Girls* are Easy talks about his new film, *Vigo*, inspired by the work of the visionary French film-maker Jean Vigo, the film is a passionate portrayal of his life.

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FILM

All poison and no darts

THE BIG PICTURE



ANTHONY QUINN

YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS (18)
DIRECTOR: NEIL LABUTE
STARRING: BEN STILLER, CATHERINE KEENER, AMY BRENNEMAN,
JASON PATRICK
100 MINUTES

One presumes it was a joke on the distributors' part to schedule the release of Neil LaBute's *Your Friends and Neighbors* on Valentine's weekend. It's hard to think of a film less likely to promote the cause of romantic togetherness, unless you count this writer-director's debut effort of last year, *In the Company of Men*. In that movie LaBute took for his model the duplicitous machinations of Restoration comedy and recast it in the harsh accents of the corporate American male, presenting the hateful but compelling story of two white-collar executives who woo a deaf office temp and simultaneously dump her.

After being roundly beaten with the misogynist stick in the US for *In the Company of Men*, LaBute has broadened his field of fire: this time men and women compete to be as appalling as each other. Its hatred seems more even-handed, though you'd be excused for not rejoicing at the news. The film daisy-chains an ensemble of urban thirtysomethings who are, to one degree or another, sex- and self-obsessed. (In LaBute's world, the two appear invisible). Our first glimpse of Cary (Jason Patrick) sets the tone: he's in bed practising his pillow talk with stop-watch and tape recorder, just prior to the arrival of his latest amour, Barry (Aaron Eckhart) prefers masturbation to making love with his wife, Mary (Amy Brenneman), who may be frigid: "She's wonderful," says Barry, "but she's just not... me." Jerry (Ben Stiller) has been rebuffed for talking during sex by his girlfriend Terri (Catherine Keener), who is later disposed to declare, "Fucking is fucking. It's not a time for sharing. I don't care what anybody says."

They are far nastier lines than that, but in their callous self-absorption those three sentences represent the closest thing to a philosophy these characters share. Jerry, who's a drama teacher, tells his class that for all the "language and lace" of Wycherley, "it's always about fucking". Or, in his case, it's always about fucking talking: Jerry just doesn't know when to shut up. Even on an adulterous rendezvous with his best friend's wife, he can't help jawing on about "fate" and "optimism" – the last thing the wife wants to hear – her husband. When, finally, Jerry's unable to get it up, you feel that something like just deserts



Amy Brenneman, Nastassja Kinski and Catherine Keener. LaBute uses his camera dispassionately, like an eavesdropper

has been served. The mood of betrayal takes hold: Terri falls into bed with a beautiful gallery assistant, Cheri (Nastassja Kinski), while Jerry, in a fit of pique, tells his best friend that he's cuckolded him.

You will have gathered that none of this makes for an edifying illustration of modern sexual manners. More surprisingly, it doesn't make for a very entertaining one either. As he did in his first film, LaBute uses his camera dispassionately, like an eavesdropper, and works almost entirely within enclosed spaces. He contrasts the civilised settings of bookstore, restaurant and art gallery with the savagely unpleasant things men and women say to one

another. But whereas one could never be sure if Chad and Howard in *In the Company of Men* were plotting the woman's downfall or each other's, the action of *Your Friends and Neighbors* never sets up a long game: we always know as much, if not more, than his characters do. This might not matter were the language as barbed as the misanthropy, but there's a halting, Pinterish blankness at the heart of this movie. LaBute is so much in love with the idea of people's selfish, despicable ways that he has overreached his means of attack: he has all the poison, but no darts.

This shortcoming is most evident in his depiction of the Jason Patrick character, a

stod who puts the art into heartlessness. To be honest, his routine with the stopwatch and tape recorder seems quite out of keeping with his avowed cynicism – surely he would regard even the pretence of enhancing a woman's pleasure as beneath him? His big set-piece is a monologue in a steam-room about the best sex he's ever had as Jerry and Barry listen, half exhausted, half appalled. Cary reveals that the best of all was, in fact, a boy he raped in summer camp. It's difficult to tell whether he's making it up or not, but its effect is to suggest a rather less dramatic possibility than was actually intended: could he be gay. In any case, Cary's loathsome feels

way overcooked. Malignity requires more stealth than a poster-boy with ripped torso and a perpetual glaze of boredom.

The rest of the cast seems enervated by LaBute's virulence. Catherine Keener, wonderful in Tom DiCillo's movies, is saddled here with such a snity-bitch role you can't see how anyone might fall for her. Aaron Eckhart, who bit off his lines with vicious delight in *Company*, is a bumbling sad sack, while Amy Brenneman and Nastassja Kinski are little more than emotional punchbags. Only Ben Stiller manages to establish a character; his Jerry is a creep, but at least he goes some way to making that creepiness involving.

The most common complaint levelled at realistic movies such as this goes, "I didn't care enough about the characters". LaBute could get away with this if he gave his characters better lines, better scenes – some sense, at least, that their cruelty is enjoyable or interesting to them, as it was to the powdered double-dealers of the Restoration comedies he so admires. No: his aim is simply to compel the audience into guilty recognition of their own fallen state. The implication is that Terri, Jerry, Cary et al are just like our nearest and dearest. But are they really? They're not my friends or my neighbours. And I dare say they're not yours either.

ALSO SHOWING

LA VITA È BELLA ROBERTO BENIGNI (PG) ■ DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART WILLI PATERSON (PG) ■ JACK FROST TROY MILLER (PG) ■ MY GIANT MICHAEL LEHMANN (PG)

■ I THINK I DO BRIAN SLOAN (PG) ■ SWITCHBLADE SISTERS JACK HILL (18) ■ HOTEL DU NORD MARCEL CARNÉ (PG)

THE ITALIAN comedian and director Roberto Benigni attempts a daring transgression in *La Vita è Bella*, a tragicomic tale about survival in the Holocaust. Benigni, playing Guido, a Jewish waiter in pre-war Arezzo, spends the first half of the movie getting into scrapes, twitting the town Fascists and courting a local schoolteacher (Nicoletta Braschi). Then the nightmare of Nazism impinges on the idyl: romantic slapstick abruptly gives way to the horror of a concentration camp, where Guido tries to protect his young son's innocence by pretending that the prison regimes are all part of an elaborate game.

It's difficult to underestimate the risk Benigni takes here. Comedy and the death camps will never make easy companions, and for most of the film's second half I seemed to be holding my breath in fear of some dire misjudgement by the film-

makers. *La Vita è Bella* does touch moments of heartrending pathos, as when the little boy (played hauntingly by Giorgio Cantarini) asks his father whether the other children are: "They're all hiding," is the father's desperate reply. Yet while we can't help being moved by the lengths this exhausted fantastist goes to shield his son from the truth, there are passages here that prompt our unease. The basic implausibility of his free movement around the camp, his farcical translation of German orders to the assembled inmates, the grandly romantic gesture of broadcasting a love song to his wife who's forgotten for long stretches of the film all provide too stark a contrast with the grim atrocities we sense in the background.

And the coating of Chaplinesque sentimentality may well set your teeth on edge. For all its flaws, however, we are left feeling only good-

will towards Benigni, not just for the foofaraw courage of his film, but for his exuberant humanity.

A little of his spirit would have been appreciated amid the scrum of this week's other films. *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* is an earnest Anglo-American comedy that's puppyishly eager to please, despite having one of the worst scores in recent movie memory. Jenny Seagrove plays a grieving widow whose dentist (Charles Dance) resorts to the creepy stratagem of hypnotising her into falling in love with him.

His scheme goes awry when she cuts-meets an American sports therapist (Anthony Edwards), who's coaching her teenage son in the 1500 metres. Will hypnotism or true love win the day? Britcom writing and some wobbly direction betray a basic lack of confidence, but the heart-throb Edwards (the other one) provides a likeable presence.

pings its own insanity. Worst of the year so far, but it would be unwise to make predictions, with the Robin Williams vehicle *Patch Adams* heading inexorably towards a cinema near you.

Life-affirming nonsense. Part Two: *Billy Crystal* does another of his festive underdog routines as Sammy, the lowly talent agent of *My Giant*. Desperate for a break, he fetches up in Romania and accidentally discovers a 7ft gin giant named Max (Gheorghe Muresan).

Hotfooting it back to Hollywood,

Sammy tries to get his outsize client a part in a Steven Seagal picture – some agent! – and then reunites him with his long-lost teenage love. Like *Jack Frost*, it jerks shamelessly on the heart-strings as Crystal decides that professional kudos is no match for personal fulfilment – a roundabout means for him to smile through tears and say, "Please love me". How needy can you get?

I Think I Do is a so-so ensemble comedy about a bunch of college friends reuniting for a wedding. Alexis Arquette plays Bob, still smarting from his unrequited love for ex-room-mate Brendan (Christine Maelan) who's now, it seems, an ex-heterosexual, too. Around them a perky and unfamiliar cast negotiates a route through the wedding party's in-laws and in-laws. Writer-director Brian Sloan shows intermittent flair for nifty social observation; his directing, however, is pretty leaden, and he relies too much on the slender charm of Arquette to carry the picture. It passes the time agreeably, all the same.

For a dose of authentic Seventies

suztiness, you might try Jack Hill's *Switchblade Sisters*, a low-budget gang flick whose sets look flimsier than a Carlton game show. Lace (Robbie Lee), the top moll, befriends wildcat Maggie (Joanne Nail), and together their girl gang take on a rival outfit led by the attractively named Crabs (Chase Newhart); then romantic jealousy sets the two girls at daggers, and hell breaks loose. Aficionados of bad taste, rotten acting and the outer limits of Seventies fashion will enjoy it, though the rape scenes and knife-fights will ensure that its following remains strictly underground.

Finally, a French valentine from

1938. Marcel Carné's *Hotel du Nord*

combines the smoky poetic with the shabbily mundane: despairing

lovers (Annabella and Jean-Pierre Aumont) find a suicide pact, while Parisian lowlife – prostitutes, pimps, fugitives – mills unconcernedly around. Carné's wistful fatalism is a perfect match for Alexandre Trauner's lovingly detailed set design.

AQ

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• ((batman: four films, four different actors. is it time to stop?))
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NEVER ONE to alienate a market, particularly one of the world's largest, Disney is back in the Chinese government's good books. According to a local news agency, the official China Film Corporation has passed the animated feature *Mulan* for a staggered release in China. The decision brings to an end a two-year stalemate between China

and the studio. Predictably, the Chinese authorities weren't exactly over the moon when, in 1996, the studio decided to produce Martin Scorsese's paean to the exiled Dalai Lama, *Kundun*. The good news comes a week after Disney's rival, Dreamworks, heard that Malaysia had banned *The Prince of Egypt*, on religious grounds.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR is gearing up for a return to the big screen and, if this week's rumours are to be believed, it's going to be a belter. She'll play Dorothy who, 50 years after she skipped down the yellow brick road, returns to Oz as a widowed pensioner. Rod Steiger, who broke the news in an interview, will play the Cowardly Lion, "now so tough he

has become a gangster and scares everyone to death".

CATHERINE ZETA-JONES isn't hanging round after her turn in *The Mask of Zorro*. Gossips has it that Jones is in the running to don the boots for a new *Wonder Woman* movie.

AH, SWEET justice. An Alan Smithee film, *Burn Hollywood Burn* – Joe Eszterhas's film about the production of the worst film ever –, this week looked poised for a victory in the Golden Raspberries. The Raspberries honour the year's turkeys and Eszterhas's horror has managed to scoop an epic nine nominations.

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Will the Lawrence murder inquiry report have implications for lawyers seeking to take private prosecutions? By Linda Tsang

Defence against racism

Would there ever have been a public inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence if the lawyers for his family had not started a private prosecution against the suspects?

The question is exercising the legal profession ahead of the publication of the inquiry report, which is expected to contain criticisms of the lawyers for the Lawrence family. "Hindsight is a wonderful thing," said one lawyer. "In many respects, the Lawrence family lawyers have been real heroes—they have had to go up against the legal system, the police and the Government. The family and the lawyers had to force the case back on to the agenda, when it could just have been another statistic."

The *Independent* revealed last month that the Lawrence family's barrister, Michael Mansfield QC, and the solicitor Imran Khan are likely to come under criticism in their handling of the private prosecution of the suspects. The report of the inquiry, which was chaired by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, is due to be delivered to the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, next week.

Benedict Birnberg, a leading civil rights solicitor who acted in the Derek Bentley case, says it is easy to be critical in retrospect. "One can understand that the family felt that they ought to try every possible avenue and, in retrospect again, they were not to know at that stage that the result may be that the suspects can never be prosecuted. Who was to know at that stage that there would be a public inquiry into the

whole matter?" Another barrister, who has acted for both the prosecution and the defence, says: "There are certainly problems in taking on major private prosecution because it is a very different approach, especially if you have acted mainly as a defence lawyer—but this was a unique situation and one can understand why they went down that route. But, as in many cases, with the benefit of hindsight it is easy to say that it would have been advisable to get a second opinion."

In this particular and unique case, the situation now is that the Metropolitan Police are reported as investigating several new leads on the death of the teenager almost six years after he was stabbed. But unless there is completely new evidence that is incontrovertible—such as a third party saying that he saw certain persons committing the crime—the charges cannot be resurrected. "Sad as it is," says the QC, "the suspects have effectively been acquitted."

For others, criticism of the legal team is really a side issue to the main problems that the inquiry has already highlighted. The Metropolitan Police has been forced to make changes in its recruitment policies and Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve has taken charge of the murder squad.

No part of the criminal justice system has been untouched by the inquiry. The Society of Black Lawyers, which made submissions to the inquiry in London and Manchester, has also proposed training on race issues for the Crown Prosecution Service and at all levels of the education system.

The society's chairman, Peter



Doreen Lawrence, with her husband Neville behind, speaking outside the public inquiry into the murder of their son, Stephen

David Rose

Herbert, says that the inquiry has shown that racial stereotypes have no place in a criminal investigation.

And according to a leader in the field, Tony Edwards, "For criminal lawyers, there aren't massive lessons because colour has not been a problem in terms of lawyers giving better service to one group, but there is a message being sent about policing and the nature of investigations."

"There is no short-term solution, but this has concentrated everyone's minds on dealing with deep-seated racism—at all stages of investigation, the prosecution and the judicial stage."

The legal profession has already speculated on the prospects of the Lawrence family getting justice for the murder of Stephen.

Some argue that even if there had been a civil case, it is unlikely that there would have been any pressure for the suspects to attend, and it could have been a damp squib. What the private prosecution did was force and then highlight the issue.

And far from any possible criticism in the report inhibiting the way defence lawyers may act in future, many lawyers consider that, unless the criticism is justified, the fact is that they have tended to set the

agenda rather than merely follow it.

What is likely to have a larger impact on how defence lawyers work is the Government's proposals on legal aid in its Access to Justice Bill that is currently going through Parliament, and the possibility of public defenders who may perceive that they run the risk of losing their job if they go too far.

As Brian Barker QC, chairman of the Criminal Bar Association, comments: "The system should cater for a wide variety of lawyers and that is the importance of having independent lawyers. If you have adequately funded independent solicitors and

barristers, there is more chance of getting a just result—for both sides."

Other lawyers have suggested further routes for the Lawrence case. One option, following a recent case in the European Court of Human Rights, is to mount a legal challenge against the police because of their inadequate investigation of the case originally. But, as the lawyers acknowledge, this will not necessarily result in what the Lawrence family want—the guilty parties being brought to justice.

Vicki Chapman, head of policy at the Legal Action Group, says: "If there are any lessons to be learnt,

it's that there is clearly a need to have a police force that has a representative mix, and a need for better training on race issues. It is crucial that you create a police force where ethnic minority recruits want to stay; the statistics have shown for some time that a large number are leaving because of discrimination in the force itself."

These are hardly new or startling revelations, as Chapman adds: "It's 17 years since the Scarman report was published. If we had learnt the lessons from that report, we wouldn't have had to have the Lawrence inquiry."

Invasion of the bean-counters

Are the ethics of accountancy and law too at odds for a shared practice? By Robert Kingston

THE ADVANCE of the world's top five accountancy giants into the legal marketplace seemed unstoppable—until this year. But the record £3.5m fines and costs imposed on Coopers & Lybrand over failings in its audit work on the late Robert Maxwell's business empire, and the recent ruling of the House of Lords on "Chinese Walls" in the Prince Jefri case, have given the world's largest professional service conglomerates pause for thought. They have also given worried commercial solicitors a little breathing space from what they saw as the relentless onslaught of the bean-counters.

The Big Five—KPMG, Deloitte & Touche, Arthur Andersen, Ernst & Young and

PricewaterhouseCoopers—all originally pure audit firms. But in the last 10 years, all have moved into practical, every field of commercial advice—management consultancy, investigative accounting, tax avoidance, information technology and corporate finance. The legal marketplace is the only area where they have failed so far to make a significant mark.

But they are determined to change that. In December last year, Edward Kangas, global chairman of Deloitte & Touche, told the press that he intended to build a global legal practice with Prince Jefri was chairman. The problem for KPMG was that its forensic accountants had for 18 months been advising the Prince in long-running litigation, which had been

settled only a few months earlier. There was a danger of a serious conflict of interest.

The team had been given access to documents detailing the Prince's assets and finances, and were acting as pseudo-solicitors, interviewing witnesses, searching for documents, drafting subpoenas and suggesting how the Prince's counsel should cross-examine witnesses in court. Now the same department was being asked to investigate missing funds for the government—and the Prince was the chief suspect.

Although systems were put in place to ensure that no one who had worked for the Prince would work on this new project, the Prince found out and objected. The case went all the

way to the House of Lords, and the judges ruled that the accountants had not eliminated the risk of leaks. The decision followed the old City adage: there is no Chinese wall over which a grapevine cannot grow.

The case has sent solicitors and accountants scurrying to look at their own procedures to prevent conflicts of interest.

More generally, the Prince Jefri case and the Coopers & Lybrand fine have given the solicitors ammunition in their arguments that the rules which prevent multi-disciplinary practices or "one-stop shops"—where clients can get advice on law, accountancy, management and tax—should be kept in place.

The more cynical of solicitors have always argued that the "ethics" of lawyers and accountants are too different.

Current Law Society rules force accountancy practices to live off their lawyers into separate firms. And these firms already discourage their lawyers from advising clients preparing for litigation, precisely because of the danger of conflicts with audit clients.

One solicitor, a partner at Kingsley Napley, Tony Sacker, says: "This is telling the Big Five accountancy firms that setting up a true multi-disciplinary is rather more complicated than they might think."

Another partnership specialist, Ronnie Fox at Fox Williams, describes it as a "red light" to the expansion plans of the Big Five. But for most consumers of legal services, multi-disciplinary practices are seen as the way of the future, with, for example, high street law firms setting up with estate agents and accountants to provide advice on all aspects of property and investment—and at competitive rates. The Law Society is currently considering the rules, and is expected to make its decision later this year.

What these recent events do is warn clients that even if the Law Society does relax its rules, the rule of law will force them to keep the solicitors apart. It is a hiccup rather than an insurmountable hurdle to the one-stop shop.

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

ENVIRON LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above company will be held at The Park House Hotel, Nelson Square, Braintree, Essex, on 25 February 1999 at 11.00 am for the purposes mentioned in section 99 of the said Act.

Creditors wishing to vote at the meeting must file their proxy, in full or in part, at the registered office of the registered office of the above company not later than 12 noon on 19 February 1999.

For the purposes of voting, a secured creditor is required to file his/her proxy at the registered office of the above company not later than 12 noon on 19 February 1999.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that a list of names and addresses of the Company's creditors may be inspected free of charge at 11.15am, St Albans, B1 1DZ, between 10.30am and 4.00pm on the two business days preceding the date of the meeting stated above.

By Order of the Board
R.A. Shiel, Director.

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

PORTSMOUTH TRUST LTD

and in the Matter of:

THE COMPANIES ACT 1985, section 175

The above-named Company has agreed to pay out of capital for the purpose of discharge of part of its debts to its creditors the sum of £1,000,000 and the date of the resolution is 10 February 1999. The amount of the credit to which each creditor is entitled follows the date of the resolution for payment out of capital as per the Court of Appeal's judgment in the case of the Auditor's report required in section 175 of the Companies Act 1985 as Order prohibiting the payment.

By Order of the Board
J.M. Page Secretary

THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

THE CROWN GROUP LIMITED

and in the Matter of:

THE COMPANIES ACT 1985, section 175

The above-named Company has agreed to pay out of capital for the purpose of discharge of part of its debts to its creditors the sum of £1,000,000 and the date of the resolution is 10 February 1999. The amount of the credit to which each creditor is entitled follows the date of the resolution for payment out of capital as per the Court of Appeal's judgment in the case of the Auditor's report required in section 175 of the Companies Act 1985 as Order prohibiting the payment.

By Order of the Board
J.M. Page Secretary

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THE COMPANIES ACT

NEW FILMS

A BUG'S LIFE (U)
Director: John Lasseter
Starring: David Foley, Kevin Spacey
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road,
Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington,
Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch,
Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin
Chelsea, And local cinemas

HIDEOUS KINKY (15)
Director: Gillies MacKinnon
Starring: Kate Winslet, Said Taghmaoui
Through the teeming orange/red/turquoise
backdrop of 1970s Morocco treads Kate Winslet's
hippie single-mum, her two daughters (Bella Rizzo, Carrie Mullan) unwillingly in tow.
Meantime, gormless backpackers, suffi teachers, thieving natives and Said Taghmaoui's child-of-the-soil love-interest weave bitter and thither across the narrative. Regeneration director MacKinnon makes a fair fist of translating Esther Freud's novel to the screen; stirring in lots of ethnic chic and a canny period soundtrack. Winslet does well with a change-of-pace role as the tale's permanently strung-out, unsated matriarch, and the child stars are startlingly good.
West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. Local: Kilburn Tricycle Cinema, UCI Surrey Quays. Repertory: Phoenix Cinema

HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK (15)
Director: Kevin Sullivan
Starring: Angela Bassett, Whoopi Goldberg
Stella got her groove back like this. She took off to Jamaica with her feisty boddie (Whoopi Goldberg), sashayed around the beach in a clinging bikini, and got herself a little love action in the form of a man (Taye Diggs) young enough to be her son. So it goes. *Shirley Valentine* with an

Afro-American spin. Terry MacMillan's bestseller has been conjured into a kind of ongoing travel-agent commercial - a coldly marketed "chick-flick" enjoying a run at cinemas before cropping up as your in-flight entertainment. Title star Angela Bassett works hard to make an impression among the slide-show of tourist-brochure visuals.

West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. Local: Action Park Royal, Warner Village, Dagenham, Warner Village, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Feltham Cineworld, the Movies, Harrow Warner Village, Holloway Odeon, Peckham Premier, Staples Corner, Virgin, Streatham Odeon, New Stratford Picture House, UCI Surrey Quays

LIVING OUT LOUD (15)
Director: Richard LaGravenese
Starring: Holly Hunter, Danny DeVito
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. Local: Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Peckham Premier, Streatham ABC

PECKER (18)
Director: John Waters
Starring: Edward Furlong, Christina Ricci, Lili Taylor

Trash auteur Waters swerves into sunnier streets with Pecker, his fluffily satirical tale of an amateur Baltimore photographer (Edward Furlong) adopted as a fly-on-the-wall artiste by the New York elite. More *Hairspray* than *Pink Flamingos*, Pecker goes big on blue-collar kitsch without ever making any real stringent point, and squanders Christina Ricci (as Furlong's hard-nosed girlfriend) into the bargain. The result is entirely genial, but you miss the old risk, edge and bad-taste artistry. Age, it seems, has mellowed John Waters.

West End: Clapham Picture House, Metro, Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Haymarket

Xan Brooks

GENERAL RELEASE

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Plaza. Local: Action Park Royal, Warner Village, Beckleyheath Cineworld, Croydon, Warner Village, Dagenham, Warner Village, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Warner Village North Finchley, Harrow Warner Village, Holloway Odeon, Peckham Premier, Richmond Odeon Studio, Sutton UCI 6, UCI Surrey Quays, Wimbledon Odeon

BULWORTH (18)
Disillusioned at the end of an election campaign, senator Jay Bulworth (Warren Beatty) turns suicidal loose cannon; hanging out in the hood and delivering his speeches in abrasive rap stylings. West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Odeon Kensington, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End. Local: Caxton ABC, Croydon Clocktower, Croydon Safari, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Warner Village Finchley Road, Peckham Premier, Wimbledon Odeon. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's story of a woman struggling to gain purchase in a male world largely neglects the opportunities for him in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty.
West End: ABC Pantomine Street, Clapham Picture House, Curzon Minima, Odeon Mezzanine

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15)
Will Smith's full-guy teams up with Gene Hackman's pensioned-off Pentagon warhorse, probes a political cover-up and gets embroiled in all manner of Big Brother-type trouble. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)
Terry Gilliam's adaptation tilts at Ralph Steadman cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, but the one stand-out is Johnny Depp - who brings Hunter S Thompson to bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.
West End: Gate Notting Hill Repertory, Prince Charles, The Lux Cinema

HILARY AND JACKIE (15)
Full-throttle playing from Rachel Griffiths and Emily Watson sustains Anand Tucker's biopic of the Du Pre sisters. Hilary (shy, married flautist) and Jacqueline (world-famous cellist). West End: Barbican Screen, Cheltenham Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Curzon Mayfair, Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Screen on the Hill, Local Greenwich Cinema, Richmond Odeon Studio

LITTLE VOICE (15)
Holed up in her bedroom, timid North Country sparrow LV (Jane Horrocks) perfects strident Shirley Bassey/Judy Garland impersonations. Bracing black comedy. Horrocks' vocal pyrotechnics, plus a marvellously weighted turn from Michael Caine push it through to the final curtain. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
An gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas' authentically Hispanic do-gooder. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

MEET JOE BLACK (12)
Martin Brest's underdeveloped rehash of *Death Takes a Holiday* stars Brad Pitt as the aquiline Grim Reaper, who gets chaperoned around the everyday delights of Planet Earth by Anthony Hopkins' dying bilionaire. West End: Empire Leicester Square, Local: Beckleyheath Cineworld, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Feltham Cineworld, the Movies, Streatham ABC

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Plaza. Local: Action Park Royal, Warner Village, Beckleyheath Cineworld, Croydon, Warner Village, Dagenham, Warner Village, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Warner Village Finchley, Harrow Warner Village, Holloway Odeon, Peckham Premier, Richmond Odeon Studio, Sutton UCI 6, UCI Surrey Quays, Wimbledon Odeon

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12)
Essentially a sibling soap-opera with a dash of mumbi-jumbo, *Practical Magic* sees Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman cast as two mismatched sisters raised from a line of witches and hexing any unlucky man who swings into their orbit. With Dianne Wiest and Aidan Quinn. West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Croydon Clocktower, Croydon Safari, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Warner Village Finchley Road, Peckham Premier, Wimbledon Odeon. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
In planning his cartoon life of Moses, DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged it "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result ends up looking more like *The Ten Commandments* by way of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

RUSH HOUR (15)
Rush Hour marries Jackie Chan with an LA backdrop, a jobbing Hollywood director and a wise-cracking black comic in Chris Tucker's huckstering LAPD man. It's a hit-and-miss affair. West End: Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. Local: Action Park Royal, Warner Village, Croydon Warner Village, Dagenham, Warner Village, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Harrow Warner Village, Staples Corner, Virgin, Streatham Odeon. Repertory: National Film Theatre

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

STEPMOM (12)
This sugar-glazed, oven-ready affair casts an out-of-sorts Susan Sarandon as a middle-aged matriarch squabbling over her offspring with the new model mom (Julia Roberts) that hubby Ed Harris has hooked up with. The first mom gets poopy and laughter turns to tears (or at least weary resignation). West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

TWO GIRLS AND A GUY (18)
James Toback's taut drama probes aggressively at the psychological make-up of its three central characters. Heather Graham and Natasha Gregson Warner are the duped girlfriends of Robert Downey Jr's love-at-prima donna, and Two Girls and Guy gives them plenty of room to move and breathe, turning the resulting yarn into a poignant acting showcase. West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket. Local: Warner Village Finchley Road

VERY BAD THINGS (18)
A bunch of stag-weekenders accidentally kill a Las Vegas whore, intentionally murder the security guard who rumbles the crime, and then start coming apart at the seams on their arrival home. Peter Berg's debut serves up swaggering gross-out comedy in a *Louder Magazine* style. With Cameron Diaz and Christian Slater. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

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by Anthony Hopkins' dying bilionaire. West End:

Empire Leicester Square, Local: Beckleyheath

Cineworld, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Feltham

Cineworld, the Movies, Streatham ABC

And local cinemas

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Shakespeare in Love (15)
This enjoyable romp suggests how romance fired Shakespeare with the creative inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet*. Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow head a multi-star cast.



Living Out Loud (15)
Holy Hunter (right) plays a Manhattan woman who, left by her husband, befriends the elevator operator in her building. Writer Richard LaGravenese handles everything with affectionate restraint.

A Bug's Life (U)
Less sophisticated and more child-friendly than *Antz*, this animated feature spins another good yarn about an ant colony and its battle to survive. Kevin Spacey provides the voice of the chief grasshopper.

The Opposite of Sex (18)
Christina Ricci plays a 16-year-old bitch-on-wheels Dede, who causes havoc when she moves in with her half-brother (Martin Donovan).

π (15)
Darren Aronofsky's debut, filmed in sooty black-and-white, tells the story of a genius mathematician. This stylish indie movie fearlessly combines *Wall Street*, Jewish mysticism and nightmareheadaches.

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

The Street of Crocodiles (Queen's Theatre)

Triumphant revival of *Theatre de Complicite*'s surreal and searing plunge into the imagination of Polish-Jewish writer Bruno Schulz. To 26 Feb

The Forest (Lyttelton, National Theatre)

Frances de la Tour is deliciously amusing as the cradle-snatching widow in Ostrovsky's comedy about tyrants and thespians. In rep

The Winter's Tale (RSC, Stratford)

An amazingly rich and complex performance from Antony Sher in Gregory Doran's Romanov-style production. In rep to 4 Mar

Oklahoma! (Lyceum Theatre)

Wideley regarded as the best ever, Trevor Nunn's glorious production (right) of the Rogers and Hammerstein classic fully deserves its West End transfer. To 26 Jun

Martin Guerre (West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds)

It's third time lucky for this much-rewritten musical. In Connal Morrison's starkly involving production, it finally emerges as a tighter, more magnificent show. To 13 Feb

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Portraits by Ingres (National Gallery)

Some of the smartest, most intense portraiture ever. Women: exquisite melanges of flesh and fabric.

Dreams of sex and money. Images of triumphant bourgeois luxury. To 25 Apr

Patrick Caulfield (Hayward Gallery)

The modern object-world made luminous. This survey of nearly 20 years' work offers his full range - notably, those bold iconoclastic outlines, bloomed in translucent colour. To 11 Apr

Andreas Gursky (Serpentine Gallery)

Photographs 1994-98 (right); widevision, high-finish, micro-detailed vistas of our world - images filled with more than the eye can see. To 7 Mar



Disasters of War (Wolverhampton Art Gallery)

"I saw that" - three ages of European war through the etchings of Jacques Callot, Goya and Otto Dix. Visions from the blackest of times. To 20 Mar

Peter Doig & Udomsak Krisanamis (Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh)

Doig's sizzling landscapes alternate with Krisanamis' collages of cultural detritus. To 27 Mar

TOM LUBBOCK

GREENWICH

CINEMA (0181-293 0101) BR

Greenwich: *A Bug's Life* 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 8.30pm, 9.45pm Little Voice 7.10pm, 9.10pm

HAMPSTEAD

ABC (0870-9020413) BR

Belsize Park: *A Bug's Life* 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 8.30pm, 9.45pm HamJacky and Jackie 4.35pm, 6.30pm, 8.35pm, 9.45pm

HAMMERSMITH

VIRGIN (0870-9070718) BR

Ravenscourt Park/Hammersmith: *A Bug's Life* 1.33pm, 6.20pm, 8.30pm Little Voice 1.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm Practical Magic 2.50pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm

HARROW

ABC (0870-9020413) BR

Harrow-on-the-Hill/Harrow & Wealdstone Fire 7pm Ham Apke Hain Koun... 1.30pm, 8pm, 8.45pm

NARROW

ABC (0870-9020413) BR

Harrow-on-the-Hill/Harrow & Wealdstone Fire 7pm Ham Apke Hain Koun... 1.30pm, 8pm, 8.45pm

WARNER

VILLAGE (0181-427 9008) BR

On Hanover on the Hill: *A Bug's Life* 1.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm, 9.45pm Enemy of the State 1.35pm, 6.3

THURSDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.6-98.6MHz FM)
6.30 Zoe Ball 8.00 Simon Mayo.
12.00 Kevin Greening 12.00 Mark Radcliffe. 4.00 Chris Moyles. 5.45 Newsbeat. 6.00 Dave Pearce.
8.00 Steve Lamecq - the Evening Session. 10.00 Trade Update.
10.10 John Peel. 12.00 Andy Kerr.
2.00 Clive Warren. 4.00 -
6.30 Scott Mills.

RADIO 2
(89.9-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 Alex Lester. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Richard Allinson.
12.00 Jimmy Young. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker.
7.00 David Alan. 8.00 Paul Jones.
9.00 Punt and Dennis: It's Been a Bad Week. 9.30 Comedy Showcase: Canned Heat. 10.00 Melvyn Talks Jazz. 10.30 Nicky Horne.
12.00 Katrina Leskanich. 3.00 - 4.00 Mo Dutta.

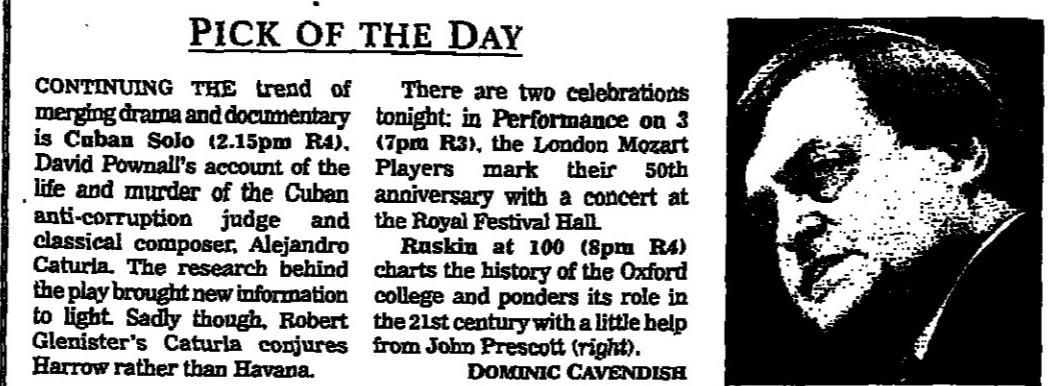
RADIO 3
(90.2-94.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Artist of the Week.
11.00 Sound Stories.
12.00 Composer of the Week:
Teleman.
1.00 Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert.
2.00 The BBC Orchestras.
4.00 Ensemble.
4.45 Music Machine.
5.00 In Tune.

7.00 Performance on 3. See Pick of the Day.

8.30 LMP at 5.00. Susan Sharpe explores the history, aims and achievements of the London Mozart Players. With contributions from musicians who have played with the orchestra, and conductors past, present and future, founder Harry Blech, music director Matthias Barnet, and James Galway, who becomes principal guest conductor in September.

8.30 Concert, part 2. Mozart: Vado ma dove? K563; Al desio di chi t'adore (The Marriage of Figaro); Bella mia flamma, K528; Symphony No 29 in A, K201.

9.45 Postscript. Five programmes celebrating 50 years of photojournalism from the world's most famous photo agency: 4: Surviving History. The shaping events and movements of the postwar era as they have been captured on film by



PICK OF THE DAY

CONTINUING THE trend of merging drama and documentary is Cuban Solo (12.15pm R4). David Pownall's account of the life and murder of the Cuban anti-corruption judge and classical composer, Alejandro Caturia. The research behind the play brought new information to light. Sadly though, Robert Glenister's Caturia conjures Harrow rather than Havana.

There are two celebrations tonight: in Performance on 3 (7pm R3), the London Mozart Players mark their 50th anniversary with a concert at the Royal Festival Hall.

Dominic Cavendish

Magnus's most brilliant photographers. (R)

10.30 Music Restored. Lucie Skeaping introduces a selection of music in praise of the Virgin, including Antoine Brumel's Ave Virgo gloriosa sung by the Orlando Consort, and a 'Salve regina' by Hasse performed by soprano Emma Kirkby and London Baroque.

10.45 Night Waves. What does reading the Bible as literature rather than history reveal about the ancient world? Paul Allen talks to Thomas L. Thompson, whose new book, 'The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past', contributes to one of the most controversial debates in cultural history. There is more biblical conflict in Nick Darke's new play, 'Plot', when a dispute among Corinthian fishermen over Sunday observance turns into a battle between rival towns: a report from tonight's opening at the Royal National Theatre. Plus views of Piranesi's monumental prison series, on display at the Courtauld Institute for the first time.

11.30 Jazz Notes.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Liszt. 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4

(92.4-94.6MHz FM)

6.00 Today.

9.00 NEWS; Melvyn Bragg - in Our Time.

9.30 Matchmakers. (R)

9.45 Serial: Tulip.

10.00 NEWS; Woman's Hour.

11.00 NEWS; From Our Own Correspondent.

11.30 Fat Chance.

12.00 NEWS; You and Yours.

1.00 The World at One.

1.30 Open Country.

2.00 NEWS; The Archers.

2.35 Afternoon Play: Cuban Solo. See Pick of the Day.

3.00 NEWS; Call You and Yours: 0870 010 0444.

3.30 Going, Going, Gone.

3.45 This Sceptred Isle.

4.00 NEWS; Law in Action.

4.30 The Material World.

5.00 PM.

6.00 Six O'Clock News.

6.30 Yes, Minister. (R)

7.00 NEWS; The Archers.

7.15 Front Row. Mark Lawson chairs the arts programme, charting the changing reputation of Robin Williams - from Monk to Mrs Doubtfire, Vietnam DJ to voice-over artiste, schoolmaster to psychiatrist.

7.45 Speaking for Themselves.

Dramatised excerpts from the letters of Britain's great wartime leader and his wife Clementine, taken from the newly published collection edited by their daughter, Mary Soames. With Alex Jennings as Winston, Sybil Thorndike as Clementine, and Helen Bonham as the narrator (9/10).

8.00 NEWS; Ruskin at 100. February 1899 Oxford Town Hall is packed to the rafters. Hundreds

have come to the founding meeting of Ruskin College, a radical new experiment in the education of the working man. 100 years on, Steve Richards, political editor of the New Statesman, asks if there is still a place for an Oxford College dedicated to worker's education, in the

age of New Labour. See Pick of the Day.

8.30 The Week in Westminster.

Michael Crick takes a look behind the scenes at Westminster.

9.00 NEWS; Testbeds. Vanessa Collingridge explores the technologies that shape our lives.

9.30 Melvyn Bragg - in Our Time.

Melvyn Bragg and guest discuss ideas and events which have influenced our time.

10.00 NEWS; The World Tonight. With Rob Lustig.

10.45 Book of Bedtime: Mark Twain Stories. 'A Ghost Story.'

Bumps in the night. Kelsey Grammer reads the fourth of five tales.

11.00 NEWS; The Way It Is. Satire, sketches and a hard look behind the week's media events. With Simon Evans, Tracy Ann Oberman and Dave Lamb.

11.30 A Good Read. (R)

12.00 NEWS.

12.45 Late Book: Lemnos' Tale.

1.00 As World Service.

5.30 World News.

5.35 Shipping Forecast.

5.40 Inshore Forecast.

5.45 Prayer for the Day.

5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

RADIO 5 LIVE

(69.3-70.9kHz MW)

6.00 Breakfast.

9.00 Nicky Campbell.

12.00 - 6.00 Ian Collins.

VIRGIN RADIO

(125.1-125.6kHz MW)

6.00 Chris Evans. 9.30 Mark Forrest. 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Harry Scott. 7.30 Pete & Geoff. 10.00 James Merritt. 1.00 Steve Power. 4.30 - 6.30 Richard Allan.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(198kHz LW)

1.00 The World Today. 1.30 Westway. 1.45 Performance. 2.00 The World Today. 2.30 Focus on Faith.

3.00 The World Today. 3.20 Sports Roundup. 3.30 World Business Report. 3.45 Insight. 4.00 - 7.00 The World Today (400-700).

TALK RADIO

6.00 Big Boys Breakfast with David Banks & Nick Ferrai. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 1.00 Anna Rabin. 3.00 Peter Deley. 5.00 The SportZone. 7.00 One to One with Andy Gray. 8.00 James Whale. 12.00 - 6.00 Ian Collins.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

WHILE JUSTLY celebrated for his unrivalled singing ability, Frank Sinatra (right) has perhaps not always got the credit he deserves as an actor. The winner of two Oscars - for *From Here to Eternity* in 1953 and *The Man with the Golden Arm* in 1955 - was able to convey a variety of emotions on screen. Maybe this was down to his contradictory personality, which fellow actor David Niven encapsulated thus: "his talent, his

generosity, his ruthlessness, his kindness, his loneliness, and his rumoured links with the Mob."

Sinatra is profiled in today's Hollywood Hall of Fame.

Ancient tribal beliefs hold that Pele, the fiery goddess of volcanoes, used to rule the Hawaiian Islands. The Curse of the Goddess Pele (6pm History Channel) examines these beliefs.

JAMES RAMPTON

1.00 Treasure Hunters (9637950). 1.30 Wheel Nuts (9638228). 2.00 Close.

SKY ONE
7.00 Count Duckula (7140). 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (34458). 8.30 Hollywood Square (97237). 9.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (16141). 11.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (24245). 11.00 The Guilty (2265). 12.00 Jenny Jones (3072). 1.00 Mad About You (5411). 1.30 Jeopardy (2250). 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (7021). 3.00 Jenny Jones (5414). 4.00 Guilty (2422). 6.30 Dream Team (6072). 7.00 The Simpsons (2272). 7.30 The Simpsons (2273). 8.00 Americas' Dumbest Criminals (2273). 8.30 World's Weirdest TV (2228). 9.00 Friends (51459). 9.30 E.R. (2288). 10.30 Vectors (52263). 11.00 I Walk the Line (970). 12.30 The Commitment (7058). 1.30 - 2.00 Long Play (762522).

SKY SPORTS 1
1.00 Treasure Hunters (9637950). 1.30 Euro Tour Golf (602430). 10.00 Sky Sports Centre (927633). 10.45 You're on Sky Sports (41904). 11.00 Boeing - Big Fight Countdown (7296). 11.30 Futbol Mundial (2496). 12.00 Sky Sports Centre (761389). 12.45 Youth on Sky Sports (761389). 13.00 Go! (857025). 1.00 - 2.00 Go! (857034).

SKY SPORTS 2
1.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (734643). 7.30 Sky Sports Centre (6070253). 7.45 Racing News (379459). 8.30 Unbelievable Sports (332685). 8.45 Sky Sports Centre (624921). 9.00 Boxing - Big Fight Countdown (622761). 12.30 International Football England vs France (593782).

1.00 Pool (239698). 12.30 Unbelievable Sports (275411). 12.30 International Football England vs France (594807).

2.00 Watersports (2367053). 3.00 V-Max (623850). 3.20 Unbelievable Sports (623741). 4.00 Football Review (622365). 5.30 What a Weekend (622365). 6.00 Inside the PGA Tour (220502). 6.30 The Big Breakdown (762507). 7.00 The Rugby Club (702032). 9.00 Ice Hockey (7509). 10.00 Golf USA (420614). 12.00 Rugby Club (632270). 1.00 Ice Hockey (727370). 3.20 - 7.00 Cricket (201687).

SKY SPORTS 3
12.00 World Wrestling Federation Superstars (702032). 1.00 Fish TV (961479). 1.30 Fish TV America Outdoors (573570). 2.00 FA Cup Classics (404041). 3.30 Badminton

(3849733). 6.30 Survival of the Fittest (7690895). 7.00 Tight Lines (9212850). 8.00 Spanish Football (9212614). 10.00 - 11.30 Football Scrapbook (5863163).

EUROSPORT
7.30 Luge (70533). 8.00 Ski Jumping (22614). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50430). 10.00 Biathlon (76171). 11.00 Biathlon (70519). 12.30 Skiing (2653).

SKY SPORTS 2
7.30 Luge (70533). 8.00 Ski Jumping (22614). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50430). 10.00 Biathlon (76171). 11.00 Biathlon (70519). 12.30 Start Your Engines (22701). 1.30 Snowboarding (2653). 2.00 Biathlon (21978). 3.00 Tennis (7614). 3.30 Alpine Skiing (50433). 4.30 Alpine Skiing (50434). 5.30 Alpine Skiing (50435). 6.00 Alpine Skiing (50436). 6.30 Alpine Skiing (50437). 7.30 Alpine Skiing (50438). 8.00 Alpine Skiing (50439). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50440). 10.00 Alpine Skiing (50441). 11.00 Alpine Skiing (50442). 12.30 Alpine Skiing (50443). 1.30 Alpine Skiing (50444). 2.00 Alpine Skiing (50445). 3.00 Alpine Skiing (50446). 4.00 Alpine Skiing (50447). 5.00 Alpine Skiing (50448). 6.00 Alpine Skiing (50449). 7.00 Alpine Skiing (50450). 8.00 Alpine Skiing (50451). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50452). 10.00 Alpine Skiing (50453). 11.00 Alpine Skiing (50454). 12.30 Alpine Skiing (50455). 1.30 Alpine Skiing (50456). 2.00 Alpine Skiing (50457). 3.00 Alpine Skiing (50458). 4.00 Alpine Skiing (50459). 5.00 Alpine Skiing (50460). 6.00 Alpine Skiing (50461). 7.00 Alpine Skiing (50462). 8.00 Alpine Skiing (50463). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50464). 10.00 Alpine Skiing (50465). 11.00 Alpine Skiing (50466). 12.30 Alpine Skiing (50467). 1.30 Alpine Skiing (50468). 2.00 Alpine Skiing (50469). 3.00 Alpine Skiing (50470). 4.00 Alpine Skiing (50471). 5.00 Alpine Skiing (50472). 6.00 Alpine Skiing (50473). 7.00 Alpine Skiing (50474). 8.00 Alpine Skiing (50475). 9.00 Alpine Skiing (50476). 10.00 Alpine Skiing (50477). 11.00 Alpine Skiing (50478). 12.30 Alpine Skiing (50479). 1.30 Alpine Skiing (50480). 2.00 Alpine Skiing (50481). 3.00 Alpine Skiing (50482). 4.00 Alpine Skiing (50483). 5.00 Alpine Skiing (50484). 6.00 Alpine Skiing (50485). 7.00 Alpine Skiing (50486). 8.00 Alpine



ROBERT HANKS

TELEVISION REVIEWS



THE WHOLE SEASIDE OF MERRY BILES (BBC2) has felt like a preparation for this week's episode, in which Detective Chief Inspector Emmore Davies, who has been a most volatile and likeable character, was jailed for corruption. It wasn't surprising that such a well-advertised disappointment turned out to be disappointing. The details of how Davies became estranged with the gangster Curtis Warren were not clear, and the sharp-eyed observation of the talk show replaced by the talkers' hands still photos.

Sill, in one way, it was the most effective and the series could have hoped for. For the last six weeks, Jenny Crowther's

films have harped on about the BBC1's catalogue of two anti-nuptial navel-gazing about the navel interlocutors being "sex

like panties while trying to cut off their partner's sexual appetites; their analyse bills

can't be preposterous. James

Krantz's in the Story: Headbands

cause him to do a double take, and he did so with a start.

Davies offered him camera some of the most eloquent comments on this state of affairs, in the form of strings of snorts and blank stares. His final detection

gave the whole programme the shape of a syllogism: QED.

That's to say nothing of things however, Davies was convicted

alongside Mike Ambrose, aka

Warrior from *Grindstore*. The

pair were described as having

caused by heartbreak, banishment, infidelity, nausea, and

feeling like being hit in the head with an iron bar. But, in two cases, Kent saw fit to

have the separated couples who

were trying to sort out their differences; and each time, it

seemed clear that the presence

of cameras - unlike in *Merry*

bounce - *Warren*, Davies had been rejected instead of

promoted, and the impression

was that this was a drama

engaged to his boyfriend, the heartbreak he caused his ex-

wife Dawn and their children,

remarried series, partly to his

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